

BACK ON THE ROAD AS AN OLDER DRIVER



DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE

Whether you're almost 70 or over, the chances are you've been isolating during the Covid-19 pandemic and perhaps even shielding. Either way, it's likely you have not been out in your vehicle as much, if at all. If so, not only may your vehicle need some attention, but your confidence may have taken a knock too. If any of this rings true, please don't despair. We've created this digital leaflet just for you! Before you continue, we highly recommend you take 10 minutes to look at our general leaflet for all drivers.

In our first leaflet "**BACK ON THE ROAD**", we saw how important it is to check the condition of our vehicle. We also looked at the main reasons people are killed or seriously injured on our roads, known as the "**FATAL 4**". So what else should we consider as an older driver and why is it important?

KEY FACTS



Older drivers are less likely to be involved in a crash than younger drivers, but injuries tend to be more serious and recovery takes much longer

134
FATALITIES

In 2018, 134 fatalities in road collisions were aged over 70

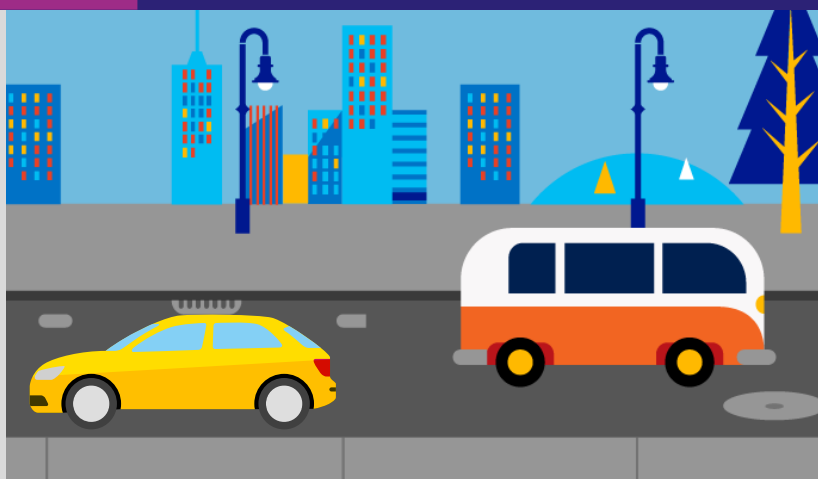
49%

The number of drivers aged 70 or over increased by 49% between 2002 and 2018



LICENCE CHECK

As a gentle reminder, please do check you have a valid licence. At the age of 70, drivers must renew their driving licence if they wish to continue driving. They then need to renew it every 3 years. If you are over 70 or will be in the next 90 days, you can renew your driving licence for free online.



LIMBER UP



Arguably the most obvious physical consideration is your eyesight. The DVLA advise us we should be able to read a vehicle registration plate from 20 metres away. As a guide, this is approximately the length of 5 cars.

How's your grip? We've all spent a lot of time at home holding on to mugs of tea or coffee but check you have the strength in your hands (and arms) to operate the gear stick and steering wheel.

If you drive a manual vehicle, check you have the mobility and reflexes in your legs and hips to operate the pedals. Sitting in a parked car and practicing an emergency stop might help reassure you of this.

The mobility of your head is really important when driving. You should be able to move your head from side to side easily and quickly to check for traffic at junctions. You can practice this whilst sitting in a chair at home and don't forget to check your blind spots.





PREPARE MENTALLY

As mentioned earlier, confidence will be a big factor for everyone returning to the road. Confidence in any skill grows with practice and familiarity so it is only natural that without these, the reverse happens. You'd be surprised by how quickly too. Additionally, the stress of recent events may have exacerbated this. **This short film is quite empowering and might help:**

You will concentrate more on your driving skills if you don't have anywhere to be by a certain time. If you make mistakes and incur the wrath of other drivers, don't be too hard on yourself. We all make mistakes depending on a variety of factors. Focus on what you did do well and consider what you could do differently next time to improve.

Similarly, remember that others on the road have been just as out of practice. If all road users remain patient and kind, our gradual transitions to our new routines will be smoother as we ease out of lockdown. **If anyone gives us a hard time unnecessarily, here's one way we can get the last laugh when we "hang up our keys".**

So perhaps start re-building by visualising the successful trips you have made many times before. Then start taking very short trips to familiar places and build up gradually. Try not to make your first journey timebound or for anything specific.

If you'd like any more advice and guidance, the **Older Drivers Forum** has created four "**Lock-Down Safety Bulletins**". These can be found **here**



Their website is also packed with more general road safety information

We deliver road safety education to all age groups and have asked young people to help with the safety of their older family members via schools.

and ask a friend or family member to quiz you. It's never too early for our future drivers to learn the risks on our roads.

If you have any health concerns about returning to the road, please consult your GP. Your GP can also help you with any anxiety you may be feeling. If there is anything else troubling you at this difficult time, MIND may also be able to help you.



All emergency services are stretched at the moment. By keeping yourselves and your loved ones safe on the roads, you are avoiding an incident which may involve the Fire & Rescue Service, The Police and the NHS.

We all thank you for your support.



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