

An Open Letter to Mature Drivers from the White Rock RCMP:

Older drivers often get a bad rap. While many remain competent drivers, research shows that seniors are more likely than other drivers (except for the very young) to be involved in a crash. When they are involved in crashes, they are more likely to be seriously injured or die, and often they take longer to recover from their injuries following a crash.

For most, though, driving is our key to independence. It helps us get from place to place quickly and conveniently at any time. Our cars make it easy for us to socialize with friends and family, run errands and get to important appointments. No wonder most of us want to keep driving for as long as possible. But some of the changes that occur as we age can increase our risk on the road.

As a Police Officer, I understand the concerns faced by many older drivers. The good news is that there are things most of us can do to decrease our risk and improve our driving. Awareness is the key: awareness of the changes we go through as we age and of the changes in our driving environment. A desire and ability to adapt to those changes can help many of us continue to drive safely.

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation, with support from the Vancouver Foundation, has developed the Living Well, Driving Well workshop. It is designed specifically to help mature drivers assess their driving and make adjustments to reduce their risk.

I have reviewed the two hour Living Well, Driving Well workshop and I know how driving safely can contribute to a long driving career. If you feel it's time to look at your driving, this workshop can help you identify the areas that may need adjusting when you're behind the wheel. You'll learn about the changes that occur as we age and can interfere with our ability to drive safely. You'll review your own driving and learn practical tips.

Do you:

- Find driving stressful? Plan a route or drive at a time that's easier on you.
- Realize you are having an increasing number of fender benders? It's time to have a discussion with your doctor. You may be able to find ways to adjust your driving.
- Take medications? Ask your doctor or pharmacist if your medications or combinations of medications can affect your ability to drive safely.

Participate in a Living Well, Driving Well workshop. As one enthusiastic participant noted, "There's something in it for everyone!"

Sincerely,

White Rock RCMP