

# Older drivers: What to do if you cannot drive anymore

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(Photo: The Salinas Californian)

## Old drivers worse than teenage drivers

Are older drivers a danger to the public? That depends on what you mean by old. Drivers between 55 and 70 years of age are the safest drivers of all. These cautious, experienced drivers have the lowest rate of collisions according to data gathered by insurance companies. The same data show that after age 70 the collision rate rises, with a steep increase after age 80. Drivers over 85 cause four times more fatal traffic collisions than teenagers. However, the teenage driver will improve with time, while the over 85 driver is likely to get worse.

## Many people give up driving voluntarily

Physical changes, especially to vision, are impossible to stop or prevent with age, no matter how healthy the driver. Peripheral vision is narrowed and the ability to adjust to changes in light is slower with advancing years. My friend Andy, 68, was weakened by a heart attack. Andy recently collided with a parked car and then voluntarily gave up driving. He said, "What if I had hit a person?" Salinas's police traffic officer Sgt. Gerry Ross commends this kind of action... "Many courageous and responsible people voluntarily give up driving," Ross said.

## Getting unsafe drivers off the road

"Family members and doctors have a duty to get unsafe drivers off the road," Ross said. Anyone can submit a Request for Driver Reexamination (DS 699) to the Department of Motor Vehicles to review a person's driving qualifications. You could call DMV at 800-777-0133 to get the form, but it is much faster to download it at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov). (<http://www.dmv.ca.gov>) Confidentiality will be honored to the fullest extent possible. A restricted driver's license may be issued after the evaluation. The most common restrictions are vision-related and usually require the driver to wear glasses or corrective contact lenses. Other restrictions include: No freeway driving, driving a vehicle with an additional right side mirror or no night driving.

## How to get around without driving

Losing driving privileges is a blow to independence and mobility in a car dependent area like Monterey County. There are some local options available to get around without driving.

ADVERTISING



The Independent Transportation Network (ITN) provides more than 200 rides a week in Monterey County. ITN provides arm-through-arm service, not just door to door. Volunteer drivers, which are desperately needed, earn transportation credit for rides; the volunteer can then donate this credit to someone else or save it for their own later years.

There is a cost for the service to cover the running of the ITN program. If a person has a vehicle they can no longer drive, the ITN car trade program converts this depreciating asset into a fund to pay for rides. If you would like to volunteer as a driver or to apply for transportation services, call 831-233-3447 or online at [itnmontereycounty.org](http://itnmontereycounty.org). (<http://itnmontereycounty.org>)

## Travel Training to use the bus

Monterey-Salinas Transit will offer travel training to people who are uncertain how to use the bus. The training includes; planning a trip, understanding the maps and schedules, safety guidelines, paying fares, transfers, and purchasing bus passes. Call MST at 888-678-2871 or email at [mobility@mst.org](mailto:mobility@mst.org) or visit [mstmobility.org](http://mstmobility.org) (<http://mstmobility.org>) for more information. The same sources can also give you information about other services available to older and disabled people.

### **Car pooling**

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) will have a local carpool and ride matching service available by spring 2018. Until then you can try the new Google carpool app WAZE ([www.waze.com/carpool](http://www.waze.com/carpool), (<http://www.waze.com/carpool>)) which matches drivers with riders for regular trips. I do not recommend Uber since that ride service does not follow the regulations and standards required of taxi companies.

### **Future of commuter train in Salinas**

Aug. 4, from 8 a.m. to noon, The Salinas Chamber of Commerce and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County will hold a future commuter train tour. It will include a bus trip to San Jose and a return train trip to Salinas.

The cost is \$20 and registration is required. Call the Chamber at 751-7725 or register online at [www.salinaschamber.com](http://www.salinaschamber.com) (<http://www.salinaschamber.com>)

Aug. 2. 6 p.m., 55 Plaza Circle Salinas. TAMC Bike and Pedestrian Facilities Committee will meet. Agenda at <http://www.tamcmonterey.org> (<http://www.tamcmonterey.org>)

*Send your comments and questions to MacGregor Eddy "Goya" at [wecouldcarless@gmail.com](mailto:wecouldcarless@gmail.com)*

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