

## SENIOR INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE

Northwest Regional Council  
600 Lakeway Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
(360)738-2500 (Voice/TDD) or (360)380-8121

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### Driver Responsibility And Safety

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#### Driver Safety Classes for Seniors

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Completion of either of these classes may qualify drivers for a discount on auto insurance.

##### **55 Alive (AARP Sponsored)**

1-888-227-7669

Classes are held at senior centers and other community locations. This is an eight-hour class held over two days. \$10 materials fee required. Call to find a class near you or get more information.

##### **Driver Improvement (AAA Sponsored)**

1-800-462-3728

Classes are held twice a year in Bellingham. This is a one-day refresher course. \$16 fee required. Call for details or to reserve a place in the next class.

#### Tips for Older Drivers

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##### Work hard to anticipate trouble

Keep a three-second-safety cushion between you and the car in front of you. Know where you're going. Avoid driving in high-traffic or high-speed areas during rush hour and bad weather. Always be alert for the unexpected.

##### Focus on your driving so you have plenty of time to make decisions

Drive with a large "anticipation zone." Look down the road far enough to get a big picture of what's ahead. Turn off your radio or keep it at a very low volume. Don't drive when you are under stress. Ask passengers to help you navigate. Don't daydream or get into involved conversations.

##### Make sure you can see clearly

Get annual eye checkups. Clean the inside and outside of your windshield, windows, mirrors and headlights. Turn on your lights when driving in the rain or other poor weather conditions, no matter what time of day it is. Always turn lights on when driving at dusk and dawn. Have the aim of your car's headlights checked.

##### Take extra steps to be a cautious driver

Use your directional signals. Position your car in the proper lane. When necessary, use your horn to show your intentions. Check your mirrors frequently. Glance over your shoulder, and in your mirrors, before changing lanes.

##### Let your car protect you

Choose a car with an anti-lock braking system and learn how to use it. Use your safety belt each time you use your car. Keep wiper blades clean and in good condition. Learn the location of all displays and controls on your dashboard.

##### Evaluate your driving periodically

Take a driver refresher course. Ask family and friends if they have any concerns about your driving. Consult your doctor about vision, hearing and other physical changes that may affect your driving.

## Requesting a Re-Examination for an Unsafe Driver

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When concerns arise regarding the driving safety of an individual, there is an evaluation system in place through the Department of Licensing. You may fill out the "Recommendation for Driver Re-examination" form provided by the state. It is available on line at [www.dol.wa.gov](http://www.dol.wa.gov) (<http://www.dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/safety.html>) or at Senior Information & Assistance.

Send the completed form to:  
Department of Licensing  
4180 Cordata Parkway – Suite A  
Bellingham WA 98226

You will need to provide the individual's full name and address, date of birth or driver's license number, and all *SPECIFIC* concerns or incidents relating to driving safety and responsibility. These incidents must have been observed first hand. It is recommended that each person who has witnessed unsafe driving complete his or her own form, as second hand information will not be considered.

The Department of Licensing will then determine what steps are needed to evaluate the situation. Confidentiality is observed to the extent possible; however; if the driver in question requests the name of the reporting party in writing, it will be released.

## 10 Signs of Hazardous Driving

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1. Problems with interpreting traffic signs.
2. Inappropriate judgment in traffic.
3. Difficulty seeing pedestrians and other vehicles.
4. Drifting into other lanes of traffic.
5. Failure to change lanes when an obstacle appears.
6. Failure to use signals when changing lanes or turning.
7. Failure to yield right-of-way.
8. Turning from an improper lane or at an improper time  
– particularly at intersections.
9. One or more fender benders or near misses.
10. Many moving driving violations.

**To obtain the  
booklet...**  
"Driving Considerations  
for Older Adults"

or a handout on  
Whatcom County  
Transportation Options,

call Senior Information  
and Assistance  
360-738-2500.

*Information from AARP, Alzheimer's Association, and Washington Traffic Safety Commission*