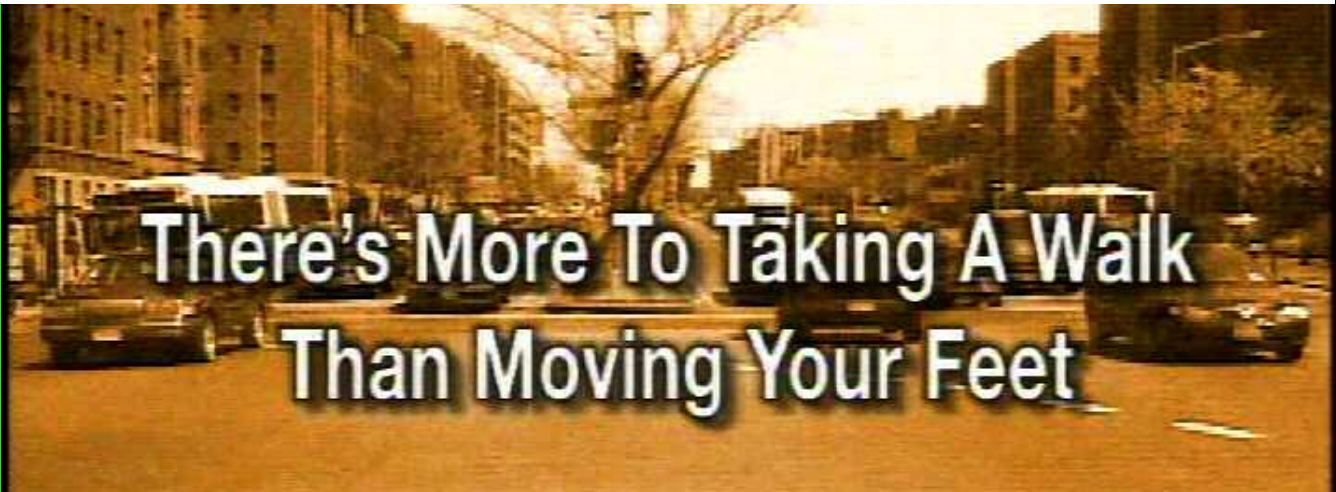


Facilitator's Guide



New York City
Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor



New York City
Department of Transportation
Janette Sadic-Khan, Commissioner

There's More to Taking a Walk Than Moving Your Feet **A Guide for Facilitators**

The facilitator's guide and the *There's More to Taking a Walk Than Moving Your Feet* video were developed by the Safety Education team of the New York City Department of Transportation with assistance from Ken Browne Productions. The project was funded by the NYS Governor's Traffic Safety Committee, the STOP-DWI program, and Traffic Safety for New York City, Inc. Information for this presentation was gathered from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), and Eldersafety.org.

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For Government Services and Information for NYC Dial 311

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UJC Adult Lunch Club, Manhattan
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Hammel Senior Center, Queens
Sunnyside Senior Center, Queens
Cassidy Coles Senior Center, Staten Island

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

Thank you for hosting the *There's More to Taking a Walk Than Moving Your Feet* presentation for older adults. Pedestrian safety is a high priority for the NYC Department of Transportation and we are working in many ways, including education, enforcement and engineering programs, to improve pedestrian safety for all New Yorkers.

This facilitator's guide and video program are excellent resources for helping older adults reduce the risk of injury while enjoying the benefits of walking. It is designed to promote lively and informed discussion about the strategies for walking safely in New York City. Materials and information for older drivers are also included in the last section of the Guide.

I hope your audiences and staff find this presentation worthwhile. I believe they will.

Sincerely,

Ilona Lubman, Ph.D.
Director, Safety Education

I. Introduction

There's More to Taking a Walk Than Moving Your Feet is a 60 minute video-based pedestrian safety presentation designed for NYC's older adults. The presentation explains pedestrian safety skills that can help older adults stay safer when they walk outside. The video, discussion points, handouts, and other materials are designed to emphasize the major risks and provide tips older adults can use to be safer pedestrians.

A brief presentation on older driver safety is also included as an additional resource. This material is useful for an audience with many older drivers and will increase the presentation by 20 to 30 minutes.

Please study the information in this guide and follow the presentation flow as much as is practical. The information sequence is designed to build on and reinforce the safety concepts critical to older pedestrian safety. Throughout the presentation, emphasize to the audience that there are actions they can perform to help them stay safer. **THE EMPHASIS IS PREVENTION.**

A. Background Information

The image of older adults as grossly physically impaired and immobile is a misconception. Actually, most older adults are active members of their communities. They shop, vote, socialize, and most importantly have their own opinions and attitudes. The following statistics point to a vibrant active community of older adults:

- 95% have no limit on mobility
- 90% are active in their communities
- 90% can read newspapers and magazines without great difficulty
- 66% of older adults report minor or no hearing impairments

However, everyone, as they age, faces physical changes that can impact pedestrian and driver safety:

- After age 65, vision and hearing impairments are common, but do not necessarily impact mobility.
- Older adults have less accurate depth perceptions (the ability to judge distances).
- Lateral field of vision decreases steadily after age 40. Older adults are less able to see objects to the side when looking straight ahead.
- Perception and responses of older adults are slower. It takes longer to perceive a hazard and even longer to react.
- Older adults take longer to learn new concepts and ideas. If learning involves reversing or unlearning an established habit, learning becomes even more difficult.

Compounding the importance of pedestrian safety for older adults is the fact that the injuries are much more serious for older adults. Older adults do not recover as readily from an injury as other pedestrians do.

- For older adults aged 65 to 74, one out of eight who are involved in pedestrian crashes die from their injuries.
- For those over 75, the incidents of death are higher. One out of six older adults involved in pedestrian crashes dies.
- The risk of death for older adults is 5 times greater than for school age children -- one out of 34 children involved in pedestrian crashes dies.

Regrettably, New Yorkers over the age of 65 account for over 35% of the pedestrian fatalities while making up 13 % of the city's population.

B. Presentation Topics

To help older pedestrians reduce their risk of injury or death, this presentation emphasizes these major risk areas:

- Intersections/Turning Vehicles
- Conspicuity (Visibility)
- Backing Vehicles
- Environmental
- Personal

1. Intersections/Turning Vehicles

Despite the availability of traffic and pedestrian signals, crosswalks and stop signs, intersections are particularly difficult for older pedestrians. Their complexity requires extra effort on the pedestrian's part to ensure that a crossing is made safely.

Turning vehicles present a high risk for older pedestrians. Older pedestrians walk slowly, react slowly and may judge distance poorly. The pedestrian must not only look left and right on the road being crossed, but must look forward and backward for turning vehicles from the intersecting road. In NYC, about 2 out of 3 fatalities occur at intersections. In over half the incidents, the pedestrian was crossing with the signal.

Older pedestrians are particularly at risk in intersections from the following hazards:

- Left-turning vehicles
The driver of a left-turning vehicle may be concentrating more on making the turn than looking for people crossing. The left-turning vehicle typically has to cross at least one lane of oncoming traffic before making the turn. Also, the driver may commit to making a turn before the pedestrian steps off the curb or even before the pedestrian is in view.
- First stepping off the curb
The pedestrian is most at risk when first stepping off the curb because a driver may not notice the pedestrian until the pedestrian is actually in the roadway.
- Cars exiting intersection
Cars leaving the intersection are typically more dangerous than those entering the intersection. Drivers may not see pedestrians in the "far" crosswalk as easily as they do in the "near" crosswalk. Also, drivers are typically increasing their speed as they exit the intersection.
- Visual screens
Visual screens, such as a parked car, truck or bus stopped at a bus stop, a mailbox, construction equipment or a bush, may block both the pedestrian's and oncoming driver's views of the intersection. The object at the intersection screens the pedestrian so he or she is not visible to an oncoming vehicle until they suddenly step out in front of that vehicle.
- Signal "Faith"
Here, the pedestrian relies completely on the signal. Without looking for on-coming traffic, he or she starts to cross the street as soon as the pedestrian light illuminates the walk signal (white walking figure).
- Signal timing
Waiting for a fresh walk signal will give older pedestrians the most time to cross the street. Because of reduced mobility, older pedestrians may not get across the street before the walk

signal changes to a flashing don't walk signal (raised red hand). If an older pedestrian is crossing the street when the signal begins to flash, they should continue crossing to the closest safe spot – a traffic island or the curb on the other side. They should not stop in the roadway or return to the curb from which they started. All pedestrians should know that the flashing don't walk signal means “**Do not begin to cross the street.**”

2. Conspicuity (Visibility)

Older adults should be aware of the importance of the concept, **See and Be Seen**, especially in the winter months. A “camouflage effect” arises from decreased daylight combined with a tendency of many people to wear dark winter clothing. With increasing shadows from lower sun angles, shorter days, and an earlier dusk, pedestrians in dark winter coats are simply less conspicuous. The visibility problem combines with other roadway hazards to increase intersection danger.

3. Backing Vehicles

Collisions involving backing vehicles occur in streets, in driveways and in parking lots. Typically, both the driver and the pedestrian are inattentive. Rear visibility may be poor and drivers may not look carefully enough for pedestrians. Pedestrians can be particularly inattentive in parking lots. Since parking lots seem unlike a roadway, pedestrians may underestimate the risks. A pedestrian may also consider the sidewalk non-threatening and fail to recognize that a driveway intersecting a sidewalk can be as dangerous as the intersection of two streets.

4. Environmental

The older pedestrians face many environmental risks: high curbs, uneven sidewalks, construction sites, fast moving pedestrian traffic, and blocked sidewalks. Poor weather conditions, such as rain, snow, and ice, are dangerous for the older pedestrian. As with backing vehicles, older pedestrians may consider the sidewalk non-threatening and fail to react to changing conditions.

5. Personal

As adults age, gradual losses in their hearing, vision, reflexes, and flexibility put older pedestrians at risk. Medications and temporary impairments may also add risk to an older adult's walk. Using hearing aids, glasses, canes, walkers, and following medication warnings and the advice of health professional can help an older pedestrian be safer. It is important that older adults walk by themselves only when they are physically and mentally prepared for the excursion.

II. Presentation Preparation and Discussion

Prior to the presentation, be sure you have the following materials and have reviewed the presentation content and presentation sequence.

A. Presentation Materials

As each presentation site may have different resources, the following list includes both required and optional materials. Before presenting the *There's More to Taking a Walk Than Moving Your Feet* presentation, please be sure that you have at least the required materials on-hand and the equipment is in working order.

- *There's More to Taking a Walk Than Moving Your Feet* Facilitator's Guide (this binder)
- *There's More to Taking a Walk Than Moving Your Feet* video
- Television monitor and VCR or DVD player
- Large white paper pad and easel or other writing area
- Markers or other writing implements
- Copies of the Walking Wisely Pedestrian Safety Tips Sheet
- Copies of the Older Adult Safety Quizzes and answer key, Pedestrian Safety IQ Quiz and Driver Safety Quiz (if driving information will be presented)
- Copies of the How Walkable Is Your Neighborhood? checklist
- Giveaways such as reflectors, magnets, etc.

B. Presentation Sequence and Content

If possible, familiarize yourself with the walkability of the neighborhood prior to the presentation. This will be helpful in the post-video safety discussion and can help you individualize the presentation for each neighborhood. For example, if the area has many driveways and parking lots, you can emphasize safety practices for these areas. Likewise, if the area has many construction sites, you can highlight the safety tips for the relevant hazards.

It is important to assess the abilities of your audience. If any of the activities seem beyond your audience's interest, capabilities, or motivation, please make adjustments to the content and sequence.

The presentation has four major sections:

- Introduction and Neighborhood Survey (5 to 10 minutes)
- *There's More to Taking a Walk Than Moving Your Feet* video
- Post-Video Safety Discussion (20 to 30 minutes)
- Conclusion (2 to 5 minutes)

1. Introduction and Neighborhood Survey (5 to 10 minutes)

After introducing yourself, give a brief description of the presentation sequence and the major goal:

- First, we are going to find out a little about your walking habits and the walkability of the surrounding neighborhood.
- Second, we are going to watch the *There's More to Taking a Walk Than Moving Your Feet* video. The video features older adults, like you, discussing their experiences navigating the streets of New York City and the practices they use to walk safely.
- Third, we are going to see how pedestrian safety practices can be applied to your daily walking habits and list additional suggestions that you may have to walk wisely.
- The goal of the presentation is make you more aware of the pedestrian risks and to present safety tips that will help you become safer pedestrians.
- Ask for any questions.
- Optional activities can include using the Older Adult Safety Quiz and the Driver Safety Presentation.

After the introduction, elicit from the audience a sense of their walking habits and the walkability of the neighborhood, using some of the following questions. Try to pose questions that will bring out more than a Yes or No answer. Write on the white pad or other presentation writing surface (blackboard, transparency, etc), key risks and hazards that can be addressed during the post-video safety discussion.

Find out if there are many drivers in the audience. If you have time, you can review some of the driver safety information in Section V.

- Who has walked here today?
- Did anyone have a “close call” with a car, bus, truck, bicycle?
- How “walkable” is the route?
- Is there heavy vehicular traffic?
- Are there many buses and trucks?
- Do many vehicles speed through or quickly exit intersections?
- Are the intersections clear of obstructions? (mailboxes, newspaper boxes, construction equipment, etc.)
- Can you walk across the streets without the red hand signal flashing?
- Are there many driveways and alleys?
- Must you cross a parking lot?
- Is there heavy pedestrian traffic?
- Are there many blocked sidewalks or sidewalks closed due to construction?
- Are the sidewalks even or are there high points and cracks or is the sidewalk broken?

Once you have written down and reviewed the major neighborhood pedestrian risks and hazards the group has identified, show the video. In the Post-video discussion, organize the information according to the suggested groupings:

- Intersection/Turning Vehicle Risks
- Conspicuity Risks
- Backing Vehicle Risks
- Environmental Risks
- Personal Risks

2. *There's More to Taking a Walk Than Moving Your Feet* video (18 minutes)

Using a new magazine format, the video helps older adults learn and practice model traffic safety behavior. By using footage of seniors from all five boroughs, the video shows scenes and discussions of realistic New York City traffic situations that older adults face everyday.

It is important that you are totally familiar with this video. The following outline is included to help you understand the major points covered. These points are reinforced in the video by having older pedestrians recount their experiences.

***There's More to Taking a Walk Than Moving Your Feet* Video Outline**

Introduction

- Video theme: walking wisely
- Statistics about older pedestrian deaths
- Key safety factors covered
 - Preparing for the walk (Story 1)
 - At the intersection (Story 2)
 - Crossing the street (Story 3)
 - Driveways and vehicles backing up (Story 4)

Feature Stories:

1. Getting Ready

- Physical changes as adults age
- Front door checklist
- Walk with a buddy
- Conspicuity

2. At the Intersection

- Signals
- Intersection Do's

3. Crossing a NYC Street

- Hazard: Turning Vehicles
- Hazard: Visual screens
- Hazard: Signal Faith
- Hazard: Signal Timing
- Hazard: Backing Vehicles
- Think Safety

Conclusion

- Call 311 for assistance with transportation-related questions
- Remember: adults model safe behavior for children

3. Post-Video Safety Discussion (20 to 30 minutes)

The post-video discussion is the audience's opportunity to share their pedestrian concerns and safety tips. Safety tips are more strongly reinforced if the participants themselves reiterate the risks and the safety tips. Remember to use and organize the discussion based upon information about the neighborhood walkability information gathered at the beginning of the presentation.

A. Comments and Questions

After the video is completed, ask the group if there are any questions or comments about the video. Write down on the writing pad any safety issues that can be handled in the context of the areas identified at the start of the presentation. If seniors wish to share their stories, ask them which of the five pedestrian risks it can be identified with and note it for later discussion (See B below). After all questions and comments are noted, proceed to the issues identified at the beginning of the presentation.

B. Discussion

It is not possible to anticipate all the issues that may arise during group discussion. The following discussion points should be touched on to reinforce the video's key messages, particularly if they do not come in the group discussion. Try to organize the discussion based upon the major risk groupings:

- Intersection Risks
- Conspicuity Risks
- Back Up Risks
- Environmental Risks
- Personal Risks

1. Key Pedestrian Safety Points

- Most collisions occur because the driver could not see the pedestrian or the pedestrian and driver were not paying attention: **SEE AND BE SEEN**
- Vehicles and other objects can obscure a driver's view: **SEE AND BE SEEN**
- The safest crossing points have:
 - Enough room to stand back from the curb
 - Crosswalks that are clearly defined on the pavement
 - Pedestrian signals
 - No visual screens to obscure both the pedestrian's view of traffic and the driver's view
- Allow plenty of time to cross the street
- Don't rely only on traffic signals. Keep looking for traffic as you cross
- Wait for a fresh walk signal for the most time to cross
- Intersections are particularly dangerous
 - Look left-right-left before leaving the curb
 - Make sure drivers see you
- Be aware of backing vehicles in parking lots and driveways
- Be aware of dogs on leashes, bicyclists, skateboarders when crossing
- Walk with a friend
- Ask for assistance when you need it
- Avoid hazardous routes if possible

2. Intersection Risks

- ◆ **Risk:** Many collisions occur when first stepping off the curb because drivers may not see you until you are right in front of them and it is too late to stop.
 - **Safety Tip**
 - Be sure to look left-right-left before stepping off the curb
 - Look left-right-left even when the traffic signal is green or the pedestrian walk signal is illuminated
 - Look left-right-left even when you are in a marked crosswalk
 - Look left last since that is the direction cars will come from first (on two-way streets)

- ◆ **Risk:** Turning vehicles are especially dangerous at intersections. Drivers are concentrating on making their turns and avoiding oncoming traffic, so they might not see you.
 - **Safety Tip**
 - Exaggerate your head turns so that you look in all directions including behind you
 - Always make sure the driver of a turning vehicle sees you. Look at the driver not just the vehicle. If you are not sure the driver sees you, let the car pass
 - Hold your hand up high to make yourself more visible to drivers
 - On a one-way street, it is safer to cross on the south side of a northbound street, the west side of an eastbound street, etc.
- ◆ **Risk:** You may be screened from a driver's view by another car, bus, mailbox or even a bush.
 - **Safety Tip**
 - Make sure that all cars have stopped and the drivers see you before you step off the curb
 - If a vehicle in the lane nearest you has stopped, don't assume that one in the adjacent lane will also stop. That driver may not see you or know you are there
 - When you want to cross in front of any visual screen (e.g., double parked car, truck, or bus), stop at the outside edge of the screen before continuing to cross and look for any vehicles that might be coming
- ◆ **Risk:** The walk signal does not mean that it is safe for you to walk across the street. If you start to cross the street as soon as the signal is illuminated, you could still be at risk.
 - **Safety Tip**
 - Don't rely totally on signals. Always look first, even if the signal is in your favor
 - Be sure to stop at the curb and look to be sure that it is safe to cross by looking left-right-left for cars from all directions
- ◆ **Risk:** Sometimes you do not have enough time to get across the street before the light changes.
 - **Safety Tip**
 - Wait for a "fresh walk signal"; it will give you more time to cross
 - Remember: even with a fresh signal, always look left-right-left to make sure it is safe to enter the street
- ◆ **Risk:** While crossing the street, the don't walk signal begins to flash
 - **Safety Tip**
 - The flashing don't walk signal means DON'T START to cross the street
 - If you are in the middle of the street when the don't walk signal begins to flash, continue to a traffic island or the other side at a normal pace
 - Don't stop in the middle of the street or return to the curb. Always continue to the other side or other safe location

3. Conspicuity Risks

- ◆ **Risk:** If your clothing blends with the background, it can be difficult for drivers to see you, even in daylight. Decreased daylight in the winter and a tendency for many people to wear dark clothing at this time of year result in a "camouflage effect".
 - **Safety Tip**
 - Always wear something bright or contrasting (like a scarf) to increase the chance a driver will see you
 - Be aware that wearing a hood can block your lateral field of vision, making it difficult to see vehicles coming from either side
 - At night, attach something retro-reflective to your clothing, purse, briefcase or anything else in plain view
 - During the day, attach something bright or fluorescent to your clothing
 - Raise your hand or even wave at the driver to make sure the driver sees you
 - If you are not sure a driver sees you, let the vehicle go by

4. Backing Risks

- ◆ **Risk:** Parking lots can be as dangerous as intersections. Driveways and alleys may also be dangerous because cars enter and leave at any time.

- **Safety Tip**
 - Do not assume that you have the right of way
 - Keep to walkways if they are available
 - Walk in front of parked cars whenever possible
 - Treat a driveway or alley as if it were a road. STOP and LOOK to make sure that it is safe to walk
 - Entering the roadway from between parked cars is risky if there is any chance that the car will back up
 - Be alert to the signs that a car is backing up:
 - Look for backup lights
 - Listen for engine noise
 - Look for drivers in cars

5. Environmental Risks

- ◆ **Risk:** Uneven sidewalks, high curbs, construction sites, blocked roadways and even rain and snow may be dangerous for the older pedestrian.
 - **Safety Tip**
 - Change your walking route to avoid the hazard(s)
 - Walk with a companion for better “safety coverage”
 - Call 311 to report sidewalk and roadway hazards to the Department of Transportation
 - Use extra caution if you can not avoid the route
 - Ask for assistance when necessary
 - Postpone your trip if possible when weather conditions put you at risk

6. Personal Risks

- ◆ **Risk:** Illness, reaction to medication, temporary impairments or even lost glasses or hearing aids may add risk to your walk.
 - **Safety Tip**
 - Put off the excursion until feeling better or you have all your “aids” in order
 - Walk with a companion if you must go out
 - Ask for assistance when necessary

4. Conclusion (2 to 5 minutes)

Once all the issues have been covered:

- Thank them for participating in the presentation
- Remind them that *There’s More to Taking a Walk Than Moving Your Feet*
- Write on the writing pad the phone number for Government Services and Information for NYC: 311
- Write the DOT website on the pad: www.nyc.gov/dot
- Hand out the Walking Wisely Pedestrian Safety flyer and any other relevant information and items

III. Presentation Material

- **Walking Wisely Pedestrian Safety flyer**
This flyer should be photocopied and distributed to the participants at the end of the presentation. It is available in English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Korean.
- **Older Adult Safety Quizzes, Pedestrian Safety IQ Quiz**
One or all of the quizzes can be used either in the classroom or taken home by the participants.
- **Older Adult Safety Quiz Answer Key**
- **How Walkable Is Your Neighborhood?**
Older adults can use this checklist to assess the “walkability” of their neighborhood and other areas where they walk frequently.
- **Driver Safety Tips/ Have You Had A Near Miss? Checklist and Quiz**
This checklist and quiz are to be printed as a two-sided flyer, and can be used either in the classroom or taken home by the participants. (For use with the Older Driver Safety section.)

What's Your Pedestrian Safety IQ?

How much do you really know about crossing streets safely?

Answer true or false:

1. It's safe to begin crossing the street while the RED HAND signal is flashing.
___ True ___ False
2. Physical changes associated with aging can impair vision, hearing and response time.
___ True ___ False
3. Left-turning vehicles pose the greatest risk of intersection accidents.
___ True ___ False
4. A vehicle traveling at just 30 mph may need 125 feet to come to a complete stop, even under ideal driving conditions.
___ True ___ False
5. Older pedestrians as a group make up 35% of pedestrians killed annually in New York City, although they represent only 13% of the city's population.
___ True ___ False
6. It is important to make sure that cars come to a complete stop before you begin to cross the street, even if the pedestrian signal is lit in your favor.
___ True ___ False

Answer Key:

1. False; 2.True; 3.True; 4.True; 5.True; 6.True

How Did You Score?

6 correct: You're a pedestrian safety genius! Take a bow!

4 – 5 correct: Good job, but listen carefully to today's presentation for more tips on crossing safely.

3 or less correct: You need to improve your safety IQ. Listen carefully to today's presentation and read through the materials you will receive at the end of today's program.



TRAFFIC SAFETY QUIZ

ANSWER TRUE OR FALSE

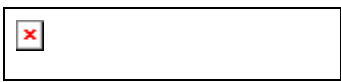
TRUE FALSE

1. ___ ___ It is safe to drive too slowly.
2. ___ ___ New York State law requires all bicyclists, scooter riders, in-line skaters, and skateboarders age 13 and under to wear a helmet.
3. ___ ___ Make sure that cars come to a complete stop before you

begin to cross the street, even if the pedestrian signal is lit in your favor.

4. _____ A 12 oz. beer, a 5 oz. glass of wine, or a 12 oz. wine cooler have the same amount of alcohol as a shot glass of 80 proof whiskey.
5. _____ It's important to know where you're going and how to get there, whether you are walking or driving.
6. _____ Older pedestrians as a group make up 35% of pedestrians killed annually in New York City, although they represent only 13% of the city's population.
7. _____ Medication and prescription drugs have no effect on perception, judgment and reaction time.
8. _____ Tailgating is safe.
9. _____ Under New York State law, the level of intoxication has been lowered from .10 to .08 in terms of Blood Alcohol Content (BAC).
10. _____ Bicyclists do not have to drive their bikes in the same direction as other traffic, or follow signs or signals as do motorists.

Quiz A



TRAFFIC SAFETY QUIZ

ANSWER TRUE OR FALSE

TRUE FALSE

1. ___ Alcohol is a depressant.
2. ___ Airbags are designed to replace safety belts
3. ___ It's safe to begin crossing the street while the RED HAND signal is flashing.
4. ___ It is both illegal and dangerous to exceed the speed limit.
5. ___ Physical changes associated with aging can impair vision, hearing and response time.
6. ___ Left-turning vehicles pose the greatest risk of intersection accidents.
7. ___ A vehicle traveling at just 30 mph may need 125 feet to come to a complete stop, even under ideal driving conditions.
8. ___ Coffee, tea, aspirin or a cold shower can sober you up before you drive.
9. ___ According to New York State law, the driver is the only front seat passenger required to wear a safety belt.
10. ___ It's more difficult to see when it's dark, icy, snowing or raining hard.



Traffic Safety Quizzes
Answer Key

Quiz A

1. F
2. T
3. T
4. T
5. T
6. T
7. F
8. F
9. T
10. F

Quiz B

1. T
2. F
3. F
4. T
5. T
6. T
7. T
8. F
9. F
10. T

Have You Had a Near Miss?

Every day it seems traffic gets more congested, cars move faster and for many, driving becomes a very stressful hassle. Is that the case with you? If so, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do you sometimes say, "Whew, that was close"?
 Yes No
2. At times, do cars seem to appear from nowhere?
 Yes No
3. At intersections, do cars sometimes proceed when you felt you had the right of way?
 Yes No
4. Are gaps in traffic harder to judge?
 Yes No
5. Do others honk at you?
 Yes No
6. After driving, do you feel physically exhausted?
 Yes No
7. Do you think you are slower than you used to be in reacting to dangerous driving situations?
 Yes No
8. Have you had an increased number of near-accidents in the last year?
 Yes No
9. Do you find it difficult to decide when to merge into traffic on a busy highway?
 Yes No
10. Do intersections bother you because there is so much to watch for in all directions?
 Yes No

Did you answer yes to any of these questions? You may have had a close call for a crash. Think about what happened at that time, and how you could have prevented it. Should you have reacted differently? Did you fail to see something? Were you distracted by noise inside or outside the car? Check the other side of this page for some tips about driving more safely.

Driver Safety Tips

Driving is a demanding activity that requires paying attention to many things at once, often in situations filled with many distractions. However, the aging process sometimes makes it more difficult to deal with distractions.

- Is it difficult to focus on the most critical information, such as pedestrians crossing or traffic detours, around you at a busy intersection?
- Are you able to perform multiple driving tasks simultaneously while you're behind the wheel? Do you get distracted by noise inside and outside the car, the radio or conversations of other passengers?
- Do you find that it takes you longer to perceive things going on in the traffic environment, and then more time to do something about it?

Here are some suggestions for keeping your attention on what's important:

- ✓ Drive with a large "anticipation zone" ahead of you. Look far enough down the road to get the big picture of what is happening so that you'll have plenty of time and room to react.
- ✓ Keep your radio off or at low volume, except to hear emergency information. Keep conversation with passengers to a minimum, but enlist their help in following directions and navigating through traffic.
- ✓ Avoid traveling during peak traffic hours, when traffic is heaviest.

Remember that medications can often make you feel drowsy or dizzy. Driving when you are fatigued or under stress also can impair your ability. Drive only when you feel alert and able to fully concentrate on the road.



IV. Resources/Information

A. Pedestrian Resources

1. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1-888-327-4236
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/>
2. Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center
<http://walkinginfo.org/>
3. ElderSafety.Org
<http://www.elder/safety.org/index.htm>

B. Driver Resources

1. AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety -- Senior Drivers
607 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20005
1-202-638-5944
<http://www.seniordrivers.org/>
 - How to Help an Older Driver brochure
 - Roadwise Review: A Tool to Help Seniors Drive Safely Longer CD-ROM
 - Older and Wiser Driver brochure and video
 - Driver Safety courses (by state and region)
2. AAA of NY
212-757-2000 or 718-224-2222
<http://www.aaany.com/>
 - Driver safety course
3. AARP Driver Safety Program
601 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20049
1-888-687-2277
<http://www.aarp.org/>
3. National Safety Council
1121 Spring Lake Drive
Itasca, Ill. 60143
1-630-285-1121
<http://www.nsc.org/>

C. Assessing Older Drivers

1. American Medical Association
<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/9116.html>
 - Physicians Guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers (PDF)
2. New York State Office for the Aging
2 Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12223
1-800-342-9871
<http://www.aging.state.ny.us/>
 - When You Are Concerned: A handbook for families, friends and caregivers worried about the safety of an aging driver

D. City and State Agencies – Senior Transportation

1. New York City Department of Transportation
40 Worth Street
New York, NY 10013
www.nyc.gov/dot
Dial 311 for traffic safety information or to report a traffic problem (broken signal, missing signs, potholes, etc.)
2. New York City Department for the Aging
2 Lafayette Street
New York, New York 10007
www.nyc.gov/aging
 - Information on all issues that affect NYC seniors: transportation programs, senior center information, health care, etc.
Dial 311 for Department for the Aging information
3. Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) NYC Transit
Travel information (24 hour service): 718-330-1234
Travel information for non-English speakers: 718-330-4847
TTY: 718-596-8273
<http://www.mta.info/>
 - Central information site for senior public transportation in NYC
 - Access-a-Ride information: 877-337-2017
4. New York City Poison Control Center
455 First Avenue, Room 123
New York, NY 10016
www.nyc.gov/health (Find information on the Poison Control Center under “Health Topics A – Z”)
Dial 311 for information on the Poison Control Center
 - Information on medication safety and poison prevention

V. Older Driver Safety (Optional)

This presentation promotes older driver safety and helps older adults protect themselves and others around them.

Also included is an Older Driver Checklist.

Please study the information in this section and follow the presentation flow as much as feasible. The information sequence is designed to build on and reinforce safety concepts critical to older driver safety.

A. Background Information

Although most older adults are in good health, lead active lives and have years of experience behind the wheel, roads now are more crowded with faster cars and often less courteous drivers. To meet these changing road conditions and the physical limitations of aging, older drivers must continue to improve their driving skills.

Safety research has shown that age alone is not a good predictor of driving safety or ability. While aging does impose physical limitations, many people can safely drive well into their 80s, while some have serious impairments at 50. However, in the USA, although older drivers drive less miles, they have a crash rate second only to that of teenagers.

The common factors that affect older drivers are:

- loss of vision sharpness
- diminished hearing
- changes in physical strength
- cognitive changes
- medications and alcohol

There is a direct link between the kinds of problems experienced by older motorists and the physical changes that occur in all older persons. All of the above changes can make driving difficult. If they are aware of these normal age related changes and learn how they affect driving, older drivers may be able compensate for them and become better drivers. However when these changes seriously impair a driver's abilities, it is time to consider alternatives to driving such as public transportation and Access-a Ride.

Some facts about older drivers:

- Fewer older people (over age 65) are licensed to drive than younger people. Those who do have licenses drive fewer miles than younger drivers.
- People age 65 and over are **more likely** to:
 - Wear safety belts
 - Drive when conditions are safest
- People age 65 and over are **less likely** to:
 - Drink and drive or ride with a drunk driver
 - Drive over the speed limit
 - Drive late at night
- The most common traffic violations for older drivers are **failure to yield, improper turning, and running stop signs and red signals.**

B. Older Driver Presentation Sequence and Content

This presentation has five major sections:

- Introduction and Driving Habits Survey
- Common Aging Factors Affecting Driving and Safety Tips
- Major Risk Situations and Safety Tips
- When to Give Up Driving
- Summary

1. Introduction and Driving Habits Survey

Give a brief description of the seminar sequence and the major goal:

- First, we are going to find out a little about your driving habits and the traffic conditions

that you face.

- Second, we are going to discuss some of the common age related factors affecting driving and how to compensate for them.
- Third, we will look at some common risk situations and explain safety tips for drivers.
- Fourth, we are going to discuss some of the telltale signs when you, or a person you know, should give up driving.
- Lastly, we will summarize the presentation with some safety advice.
- The goal of this presentation is to help you take the necessary steps to be the safest driver that you can be.
- Ask for any questions.
- Optional activities can include using the Driver Safety Checklist

After the introduction, use some of the following questions to elicit from the audience their driving habits and the traffic conditions that they face. Write their responses on the white pad or other presentation writing surface (blackboard, transparency, etc).

- Who has driven here today?
- How long is the trip from home?
- What are the traffic conditions you encountered?
 - Heavy congestion
 - Speeding
 - Angry drivers
 - Difficult turning situations
 - Any highway driving
 - How was it finding parking
- Do you drive frequently?
- Where do you usually go?
- Do you drive on local streets?
- Do you drive on large avenues?
- Do drive on highways?
- Do you ever feel hassled or stressed when you drive?
- Are you often very tired at the end of a trip?
- Is driving just getting too difficult?

Write down this information. You can use the responses to organize the information according to the suggested groupings:

- Common Aging Factors Affecting Driving and Safety Tips
- Major Risk Situations and Safety Tips
- When to Give Up Driving

2. Common Aging Factors Affecting Driving

The common aging factors that affect driving are:

- loss of vision acuity
- diminished hearing
- changes in physical strength
- psychological changes
- medications and alcohol

1. Loss of visual acuity

Over 40 years of age, eyes change and not for the better. Physically, the eye's lens loses the ability to change focus quickly, peripheral vision narrows, and the retina becomes less sensitive to light. At age 60, a driver needs three times as much light objects to see as a teenager does, and it will take more than twice as long for the eyes to adjust from light to darkness. Many older adults find it difficult to see clearly in low light, to distinguish contrasts and colors, and to use their peripheral vision. Many experience an increased sensitivity

to glare. Since most decisions made while driving are based on visual information, good eyesight is crucial to safe driving.

Safety Tips

- Get regular eye check-ups at least once a year.
- Let your eyes get used to the dark for a few moments before driving at night. Buckle your safety belt and check your side and rear view mirrors while your eyes are adjusting.
- If you have trouble with night vision or glare from headlights, limit driving to daytime hours.
- Avoid heavily tinted windshields and windows.
- Remove tinted glasses or sunglasses before driving in low light.
- Keep headlights, mirrors, and windshields clean – including the glass inside the car.
- Turn your headlights on in the rain, snow or other bad weather conditions, even during the day. Having your lights on helps other drivers see you.
- Turn your head frequently to compensate for diminished peripheral vision.
- Keep your eyes up. Look ahead to see trouble before you reach it.

2. Diminished hearing

About 20% of people age 55 and over have impaired hearing. Approximately 30% of those over age 65 are hearing impaired. Hearing ability is very important to driving. Hearing can warn the driver of danger with signals such as the sound of horns, sirens, and screeching tires. There are times when a driver can hear a car and not see it. Good hearing helps a driver be alert to what is around them.

Safety Tips

- Get a hearing check if you or others notice a hearing decline.
- Keep the radio tuned low or off.
- Keep conversation with passengers to a minimum, but enlist their help in following directions and navigating through traffic.

3. Changes in physical strength

Driving is a physical activity. It takes strength, flexibility and coordination to operate a vehicle.

- Reduced shoulder and arm flexibility affects ability to turn the steering wheel to make turns.
- Reduced leg, knee, ankle, and foot flexibility affects the ability to move the foot from accelerator to brake.
- Reduced head and neck mobility (most common) restricts ability to effectively scan to observe blind spots, hinders timely recognition of conflicts during turning and merging maneuvers, and looking behind when backing up.

Disease such as diabetes, arthritis, Parkinson's disease, stroke, dementia, heart rhythm abnormalities, and depression seriously impair driving skills. Improving physical well-being can improve safety. Exercise to increase stamina and flexibility can reduce fatigue and increase range of motion. It can make steering, scanning, and backing up easier.

Safety Tips

- Stay physically fit through a regular regimen of exercise.
- Move the trunk of your body not just your head to scan blind spots.
- Ask a reliable passenger for help in navigating through traffic.

4. Cognitive (Psychological) Changes

Driving is a demanding activity that requires paying attention to many things at once, often in situations filled with many distractions. Age lengthens the time it takes for the brain to process information and also makes it harder to ignore distractions. In addition, the perception-reaction time of older adults is slower than that of a younger person. Older adults need more time to make a decision about what is an appropriate action and then need more time to act.

Safety Tips

- Drive with a large “anticipation zone” ahead of you. In other words leave more room between you and the vehicle ahead so you’ll have plenty of time to react.
- Avoid left turns if you are uncomfortable making them. If you must turn left, pay extra attention to the speed of the cars coming toward you.
- Reduce distractions such as radio and cell phone.
- Avoid traveling during peak traffic hours when traffic is heaviest.
- If highways are too confusing or feel too fast-moving, try to plan alternative routes.
- Plan and go over your route ahead of time so you will not have to make last minute decisions.
- Fatigue and stress also can impair driving. Drive only when you feel alert and fully able to concentrate on the road.

5. Medications and alcohol

Medications can erode driver safety by making a driver feel drowsy, dizzy or distracted. This includes over-the-counter (OTC) drugs which are more powerful now since many former prescription drugs can now be bought OTC. Be sure to read and heed the warning labels on all medications. Age-related changes in drug absorption and misuse (if one is good, two is better) can conspire to undermine the judgment and safety of the older driver.

Mixing alcohol and driving is dangerous at any age, but with lower metabolisms and slower absorption time, alcohol is particularly risky for older drivers. Also, medications that older persons take can interact with alcohol and cause adverse reactions. Never drink and drive.

Safety Tips

- If the medication is labeled “Do not use while operating heavy machinery”, do not drive
- Discuss your medication and its effects with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Avoid driving when you first start taking a medication. Side effects such as dizziness or drowsiness are often worst in the first few days.

Ask if there are any questions or comments. When any discussion is finished announce the next topic: Major Risk Situations and Safety Tips.

3. Major Risk Situations and Safety Tips

Be sure to include any of the driving situations that were raised by the participants during the Introduction section in this portion of the presentation.

Situations such as those listed below may affect driving:

- Failure to yield
- Left turns
- Changing lanes
- Merging
- Backing up

1. Failure to yield

Failure to yield at traffic signals, stop signs, in parking lots, etc. is the most common cause of crashes for older drivers.

Safety Tips

- Leave plenty of room between you and other vehicles.
- Check the appropriate mirrors and all blind spots before making any move.
- Ask passengers to assist you in right-of-way situations to ensure that no traffic is in the way.
- Keep distraction in your car to a minimum.
- Drive only when you are able to concentrate on the road and your driving.

2. Left Turns

Making a left turn can be especially difficult for older drivers. Turning left into oncoming traffic is the second most common type of vehicular crash for older adults.

Safety Tips

- Avoid left turns by making three rights (going around the block) whenever possible.
- Make left turns at intersections that have a dedicated left turn lane with a turn arrow or light.
- Be sure to check around you for traffic and use your turn signal well in advance of making the turn.
- Allow plenty of time and space to make the turn and watch for pedestrians, bicycles, other turning cars, and cars coming in the opposite direction.
- Keep wheels straight until the actual turn. If someone hits you from behind before you turn, you will not be pushed into oncoming traffic.

3. Changing lanes

Lane changing on four-lane streets and highways is challenging for even the most experienced drivers. On streets with double parked vehicles, turning vehicles and vehicles entering from driveways and parking lots, a driver is often forced to change lanes.

Safety Tips

- On highways and city streets, stay in the right hand lane as much as is practical.
- On highways and city streets when you are changing lanes:
 - Use your turn signal to show the other drivers your intent to change lanes.
 - Check your side and rear view mirrors to make sure the lane is clear.
 - Be sure to turn your head to check the appropriate blind spot.
- On city streets when you change lanes, keep conversation with passengers to a minimum. Enlist their help in following directions and navigating through traffic.

4. Merging

Merging is the hardest part about highway driving, especially when traffic is heavy. Be sure to observe the posted speed on the ramp.

Safety Tips

- As you approach the merge lane, start to match the speed of the traffic already on the highway.
- Check for gaining traffic and accelerate to merge into it.
- If traffic is very heavy do not come to a stop, but slow down part way down the ramp and then accelerate into the merge.
- Give yourself plenty of room if there are cars ahead of you who are also merging.

5. Backing up

Motorists must often back up in parking lots, to exit driveways, to leave parking spaces, and evade double parked cars.

Safety Tips

- Remember to take pedestrians into account when backing up.
- Turn your head and look out the window while steering with one hand.
- Back up slowly to be sure that you've taken into account changing traffic conditions.

4. When to Give Up Driving

A driver's age is not a good predictor of driving ability. Road performance is what counts.

While most older people take appropriate steps when they detect a problem with their driving, it is not always as obvious when a general health problem, vision problem or a side effect of medication will lead to a driving impairment. Often changes come on gradually and you may not be totally aware of the onset of impairments. You

may need help in analyzing your driving abilities.

Here are a few of the signs of diminished capacity for driving safety:

- Have you had a series of minor collisions or near misses?
- Are you having wandering thoughts or being unable to concentrate because of traffic noise, the radio, or conversations of other passengers?
- Do you have difficulty reading the instrument panel at night or reading ordinary road signs along the road as you drive?
- Have you missed a turn because you couldn't read the name on a street sign?
- Are you getting lost on familiar roads?
- Are drivers honking at you frequently?
- Are you highly stressed while driving?
- Are family and friends concerned about your driving?
- Have the police stopped you for overly slow or erratic driving?
- Is it difficult for you to focus on critical driving information, such as pedestrians crossing, traffic detours, or busy intersections?
- Do you find it harder to decide when to join traffic on a busy highway?
- Has your doctor or other health caregiver advised you to restrict or stop driving?

Professional assessment is available from the Department of Motor Vehicles, physicians, AARP, and other public safety and driving organizations. Get and accept the feedback from family, friends, neighbors, and any one else (clergy, shopkeepers, etc.) about your driving abilities.

5. Summary

Since you have been driving for quite a few years, you bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the task. We have seen that certain physical changes occur that affect driving skills, but by using the techniques we discussed above you can maximize your driving ability and minimize your risk of injuring yourself and others.

Traffic situations on today's streets and highways present many challenges, but vehicle crashes can be prevented by following a few basic principles:

- Always use safety belts.
- Keep mentally and physically fit.
- Get regular medical check ups, eye exams, and hearing tests.
- Never drink and drive.
- Know how medications affect your ability to drive.
- Driver safety requires your full attention. To reduce distractions:
 - Keep the radio off or the volume low.
 - Limit conversation to what is necessary.
 - Focus on the traffic ahead, behind, and next to you.
- Avoid busy streets, roads and intersections.
- Maintain a greater distance between you and the car ahead of you.
- Avoid driving when traffic is heavy (i.e., rush hour, holiday weekends)
- Avoid traveling during heavy rainstorms or when there is snow and ice on the road.
- Alter your route to avoid making left turns.
- Drive shorter distances.
- Drive during daylight hours only. Try to avoid traveling in the direction of the sun as it sets or rises.

Thank you for your attention and remember, as a driver you have your safety and the safety of others in your hands.

Refer to the Resources section for additional information (addresses, phone numbers, websites) that you may wish to share with the participants.