

## *Facts About Older Drivers*

- There were 31 million older licensed drivers in 2007 — an 19-percent increase from 1997. (NHTSA, 2008)
- Older adults wear seat belts more often than any other age group. (CDC, 2002)
- Most older drivers recognize their limitations and avoid driving at risky times. Most traffic fatalities involving older drivers in 2008 occurred during the daytime (80%), occurred on weekdays (72%), and involved other vehicles (69%).(NHTSA, 2008)
- Because the human body becomes fragile and heals much slower with age, traffic fatality rates are 17 times higher for drivers over 65. (AAA, 2006)



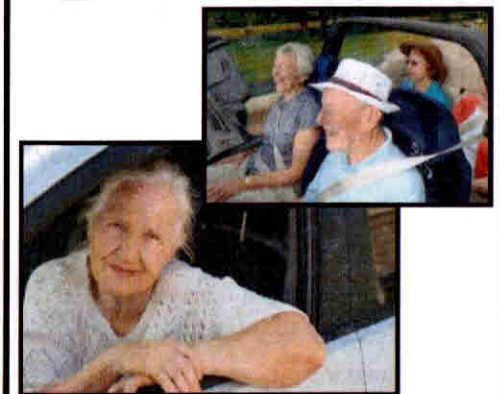
## **FREE PRESENTATIONS AVAILABLE ON:**

***Driving Safety for Seniors***  
***Fraud/Scams***  
***Identity Theft***  
***Home/Vehicle Safety***  
***Safe Shopping***  
***Emergency Preparedness***

Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office  
TRIAD Program  
Attn: Corporal Kelli Bruemmer  
201 North Shartel  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102  
Phone:  
405-713-1950  
Fax:  
405-755-4413  
Email:  
sokelbro@oklahomacounty.org  
Web:  
www.oklahomacounty.org/sheriff



## *Safe Driving and the Older Adult*



*Stay Informed*  
.  
.  
.  
*Stay Alive*

**Sheriff John Whetsel**  
**Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office**  
201 North Shartel  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102  
(405) 713-1000  
www.oklahomacounty.org/sheriff



# Issues Affecting Older Drivers...

## Age

Most experts agree that driving skills gradually begin to deteriorate around age 55. But not all drivers are the same.

- As we age, our brain takes longer to process information, affecting our response skills on the roadway.
- At age 65, about 30% of people suffer from some sort of hearing loss, making it easy to miss emergency sirens, horns, and railroad warnings.
- About 80% of people 70+ suffer from arthritis which can make turning, twisting, or flexing difficult; ALL actions that are required to turn the steering wheel, move between the accelerator and brake pedals, shift gears, and open vehicle doors.



*(AAA, Foundation for Traffic Safety, 2006)*

## Medication

Older adults make up 11% of the population, but use 25% of all the prescription drugs in the United States.

- Many medications cause drowsiness, zap energy, and slow reaction time. Read your labels, and plan ahead for possible side effects.
- If you see different physicians for different medical issues, you may be prescribed medications that have negative interactions. Tell each doctor about ALL medications you are taking.
- Alcohol can multiply the side effects of your medicines. Use caution when having even just one drink, and do NOT get behind the wheel of a car.



### Title 47 O.S. § 11-902a3

"It is unlawful and punishable... for any person to drive, operate, or be in actual physical control of a motor vehicle within this state who is under the influence of any intoxicating substance other than alcohol which may render such person incapable of safely driving or operating a motor vehicle."

## Illness

Today, more than 5 million Americans suffer from dementia, Alzheimer's, or some other type of brain disease.

- When we drive, different areas of the brain cooperate, prioritize information, and plan for responses.
- Small changes in behavior will begin to show, and will become worse over time:

- ⇒ Riding the brakes
- ⇒ Hitting curbs
- ⇒ Driving at inappropriate speeds
- ⇒ Difficulty parking in defined spaces
- ⇒ Increased agitation while driving
- ⇒ Delayed responses
- ⇒ Difficulty maintaining lane position
- ⇒ Getting lost in familiar places

Visit [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org) for more information on dealing with Alzheimer's Disease, or call the Alzheimer's Association 24-hr helpline:

**1-800-272-3900**