

Title: Time to Retire

Subhead: Old age impairs driving, impacting everyone on the road.

Reported By: Kora Smith

Driving on the highway at night, an elderly driver was about to miss her exit and cut across the right lanes in an attempt to make it. She merged into the back of the car I was riding in, causing me and my friend, who was driving, to spin around on the highway and end up in the median facing oncoming traffic. I know I am not the only teen to experience a situation like this. That being said, drivers over the age of 75 should not be driving. As people age, their reaction times slow, their hearing and eyesight worsen and they develop medical conditions such as dementia.

According to Autoinsuranceez.com, “The rate of fatal crashes per mile traveled increases after age 70, peaking among drivers 85 and older.”

Elders often make lane change violations, drive too slowly, pull out in front of other cars, get lost, stop in the middle of the road and get confused. This doesn’t just affect senior drivers, though; it affects all drivers, including high school students. I believe we can avoid this by requiring senior drivers over the age of 75 to take a written and physical driving test every three years when they renew their licenses.

“Knowing that there aren’t going to be people with dementia or other issues on the road will make new drivers feel better about driving,” senior Izzy Downing said.

The Missouri Department of Revenue requires drivers 70 and older to renew their licenses every three years and must take a vision and road sign test. However, it is not mandatory for the drivers to actually get behind the wheel.

“It depends on the person,” Liberty police officer Jerrol Anderson said, “If someone is still licensed as a legal driver, we can't tell them he can't drive. It's a tricky situation because you have to have a valid reason; you can’t just take away people's rights.”

Indeed, there is legally no age limit to driving, and it is unconstitutional to take away someone's right. Also, some seniors are capable of driving. However, it's for the greater good of the community, not just the elderly drivers themselves. It is only fair for all older drivers to be tested.

“I've talked to people who have seizures and other problems and they can't drive anymore because of their physical ailments,” Anderson said, “It's unfortunate, and it's a bigger challenge in life, but it's just part of circumstances that you can't control.”

Requiring physical driving tests every three years that assess reaction time, hearing, retracting steps and overall cognitive functions after the age of 75 is essential. It is only fair to separate the less-capable drivers from the road and allow the more functional ones to continue driving until their time to retire is reached.

<https://www.autoinsuranceez.com/elderly-drivers-time-stop-driving/>

<https://dor.mo.gov/>

<https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/missouri-driving-laws-seniors-older-drivers.html>