> **Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.**
> *Alan Lakein*
> *Author*

#PlanAhead Your Key to Driving Safely

Navigating the Road to Becoming a Mature Driver

It's day four of Drive Safely Work Week and today's focus is on helping employees stay safe on the road as they age. Driving is both a physical and mental task that requires flexibility and focus. There are things that can be done at every age to help keep driving skills sharp for years to come.

> "Older adults are more likely than younger workers to die in a motor vehicle crash at work, and this risk cuts across all industries and occupations. Employers and workers share the responsibility for keeping older drivers safe at work."
>
> *Dr. Stephanie Pratt, Coordinator, NIOSH Center for Motor Vehicle Safety, and federal liaison to the NETS board of directors*

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death at work for employees age 55 and older—about 1/3 of all deaths. And, workers 65 years or older have 3 times the risk of dying in a crash at work compared to those 18 to 54. Employees aged 55 and older are expected to make up more than 25% of the workforce in 2020 compared to less than 12% in 1990.[1]

Older adults are choosing to stay longer in the workforce as Americans continue to live healthier and longer lives. As they develop strategies for keeping employees safe behind the wheel, organizations should consider the physical and mental changes that mature drivers may be experiencing. This is a positive step in keeping these experienced and valued employees safe both on and off the job.

LONG-TERM PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

ASSESS YOUR WELLNESS PROGRAM

The ability to drive safely is affected by physical and cognitive changes associated with normal aging. These include declines in visual acuity, skill in processing complex visual information, reaction time, execu-tive functioning, and contrast and glare sensitivity. These factors can be addressed by employers through injury prevention and wellness programs, and by workers through regular health examinations and screenings.

FLEXIBLE WORK POLICIES

Does your organization tailor policies or guidelines for employees based on their specific changing health needs? Encourage managers to regularly meet with employees to ensure their safety by considering these options and more:

- Eliminating night-time driving if vision becomes problematic
- Offering flexible work schedules that allow commuting during non-peak hours or greater use of public transportation
- Re-assessing job requirements to minimize driving

Policies like these can help all employees, not just mature drivers.

1 CDC, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Aug. 23, 2013

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Day 4 Activities

EMAIL BLAST

Working in a quick workout while at work

The physical aspect of driving requires flexibility and strength. Being limber helps your entire body to move more freely, allowing you to observe the road from all angles. It will also increase comfort on long drives, and can assist in warding off fatigue, helping to improve reaction time and allowing you to be better focused. Hours spent sitting, whether at your desk or on the road, can be tough on your body. But there are simple exercises you can do right at your desk or during a rest stop to help you improve your body's flexibility and strength. Take every opportunity to get yourself moving, even if just for a few minutes at several intervals throughout the day. Just be sure to check with a doctor before starting any new exercise regimen. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

- ✓ Park in the outer areas of parking lots to get in some extra steps
- ✓ Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- ✓ Stand up when you talk on the phone or attend a meeting
- ✓ Take a brisk 10-minute walk during a break, a rest stop or at lunchtime
- ✓ Do some simple exercises at your desk. This link from the Washington Post has some great moves that include visuals: www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/health/workout-at-work/
- • *Resource: Email Blast Word file*

SHORT-TERM PLANNING: WHAT YOU CAN DO TO RECOGNIZE DSWW TODAY

TWEET/POST

- • *90% of a driver's reaction time depends on vision. When did you last have yours checked? #PlanAhead #DSWW2015*
- • *Pack smart snacks to satisfy hunger & help maintain alertness behind the wheel. #PlanAhead #DSWW2015*

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PLAN

1. Distribute the Navigating the Road to Becoming a Mature Driver employee handout.
2. Choose from additional employee engagement activities.
- • *Resources: Navigating the Road to Becoming a Mature Driver handout*

OPEN YOUR EYES TO HOW IMPORTANT THEY ARE FOR SAFE DRIVING

Host a 5-minute safety talk to focus on the importance of vision for safe driving. Use or adapt the PowerPoint provided to highlight the importance of good vision in driving and the value of eye exams in identifying other health issues. The PowerPoint could also be modified with vision coverage and distributed as a stand-alone resource.

- • *Resource: Open Your Eyes PowerPoint*

REFRESH EMPLOYEES ON THEIR VISION BENEFITS

If vision coverage is part of your organization's benefits package, distribute an e-mail reminding employees of their benefits and encourage everyone to take advantage, even if they don't think they have a vision issue. You might consider emphasizing these messages in your communication:

- • Nearly all of the sensory input needed to drive comes from visual cues.
- • 20% of U.S. adults mistakenly believe they do not need an eye exam unless they are having trouble seeing.
- • Your driving can be affected by issues with distance vision, peripheral vision, near-vision focus, night vision, color vision and depth perception. Many of these issues can go undetected without a regular full eye exam. How long has it been since you last had your eyes checked? Remember, your benefits cover *[insert coverage]*. You are encouraged to take full advantage of your vision benefits to help you stay safe on the road.
- • *Resource: Email Blast Word file*

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for Traffic Safety

Drive
Safely
Work
Week