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## Alzheimer's Disease and Driving

### **Older Driver Safety**

Dealing with a loved one's ability to drive is an emotional issue, involving not just a person's sense of independence, but also their safety and the safety of others.

**To help you assess if the time has come to stop your loved one from driving, think about the skills that are necessary to drive safely:**

- Good vision
- Good hearing
- Good reaction time
- Good coordination
- Ability to make decisions
- Alertness to what is happening nearby

**Be aware of signs of driving problems. Has he or she:**

- Become lost in familiar places?
- Made slow or poor decision in traffic?
- Stopped observing traffic signs?
- Driven at inappropriate speeds?
- Become angry or confused when driving?

If you feel your loved one should no longer be driving, discuss your concerns with him/her. Sometimes people will make the decision to stop driving themselves because they feel they are not as sharp as they once were. Unfortunately, not everyone will give up driving on their own. You may have to solicit the assistance of a doctor, a lawyer or your insurance agent.

**Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles**

The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) can help. In Virginia, the DMV's Medical Review Services is responsible for the review of individuals who may have a physical or mental condition that impairs their ability to drive safely. The Code of Virginia, in addition to guidance from DMV's Medical Advisory Board, establishes policy regarding the overall medical review requirements.

DMV relies strongly on information provided by physicians, law enforcement, judges, relatives, and other reliable sources. Also, customers applying for or renewing a driver's license are required to provide information on any physical, visual, or mental condition that may impair their ability to drive safely. The [Medical Review Request \(MED-3\)](#) may be used to report information to DMV. Reports must be submitted in writing or using the Medical Review Request:

DMV promptly reviews all initial reports of hazardous or impaired drivers.

- By fax: 804-367-1604 or 804-367-0520
- By mail:

Department of Motor Vehicles

Medical Review Services

Post Office Box 27412

Richmond, Virginia 23269-0001

Phone: 804-367-6203

In reviewing drivers, DMV's goal is to allow individuals to drive as long as they can exercise reasonable and ordinary control of their vehicle. Although each case is evaluated on its own merits, DMV is concerned about any condition that alters the level of consciousness, vision, judgment, or motor skills. In accordance with Virginia Code, DMV may require any one or more of the following: medical report, vision report, driver license knowledge test, driving skills test. DMV sends the driver a notice advising him/her of the requirement to submit a medical/vision report or to pass a driver licensing test when DMV has received information concerning the driver's ability to drive safely. As a follow up, DMV may require some drivers to successfully complete driver license testing once the initial medical report is approved. In cases where the driver's physician submits the initial impaired driver report recommending that the person no longer drive, DMV will send a notice of

suspension to the driver.

Upon review of the medical/vision information and test results by DMV's Medical Review Services personnel and staff physician, DMV may suspend or restrict driving privileges, require the driver to submit periodic reports, or take no further action. DMV notifies the driver of the medical review decision once the evaluation is completed. If DMV places the driver on periodic review, medical and/or vision reports may be required every three, six, twelve or twenty-four months. For additional information and forms related to medical review of drivers, visit DMV's web site at [www.dmv.virginia.gov](http://www.dmv.virginia.gov) or contact DMV's Medical Review Services at 804-367-6203.

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The **Alzheimer's Association** is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health.

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