



National Safety Council

Position/Policy Statement

The Older Driver

The National Safety Council, the U.S. Congress and the Department of Transportation recognize that, as the U.S. population is living longer, there are many more Americans driving into their seventies, eighties and beyond. In 1988, the Transportation Research Board report, "Transportation in an Aging Society", cited that in 1940 – 7% of the population was 65 or older – by 2020, 17% of the population would be over 65, and almost half of these older persons would be 75 or older. It should be a major objective to promote the mobility and safety of these older drivers and to help ensure improved safety on our Nation's highways.

Therefore, the National Safety Council supports programs and activities to improve the safety and mobility of older drivers and all drivers, provided such programs and activities:

- Recognize the older driver population with dignity, fairness, and sensitivity.
- Recognize and support the necessary research in this important area of motor vehicle transportation.
- Provide for comprehensive approach which addresses all elements of driving – driver licensing, vehicle design, roadway design and operation, and effective and well maintained traffic control devices.
- Prevent unnecessarily restrictive practices on the basis of age alone. The Council endorses the graduated license concept as a means of achieving the best balance between the safety and mobility needs of the older driver.
- Wherever necessary, provide for alternative means of transportation.
- Encourage participation by all levels of the private and public sector: citizen groups, vehicle manufacturing and insurance industries, the media and all levels of government.
- Provide and offer training and educational programs to educate the driving public about the effects of aging and driving performance – and alternatives to driving, and training programs that are designed for the needs of the older driver.
- Wherever possible, design means to encourage and enable older drivers to self regulate their driving based on their abilities.

This position statement reflects the opinions of the National Safety Council but not necessarily those of each member organization.

Approved by Board of Directors, May 6, 1994