

## National Blueprint for Injury Prevention in Older Drivers

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**Introduction:** Driving a vehicle can be essential for community mobility and engagement in occupations that give meaning and purpose to life. A national Older Driver Blueprint was developed in Canada with key stakeholders to enhance safe driving, injury prevention and community participation among older adults.

**Objectives:** Several objectives were addressed to inform the Blueprint including to identify scientific evidence related to older driver safety; determine older adults' perceived needs for driver refresher programs; and review existing driver refresher programs in Canada.

**Method:** Systematic reviews were conducted on the effectiveness of driving-related injury prevention and the impact of prevalent medical conditions on driving safety of older adults. In addition, focus groups with older drivers were held across the country to discuss driver refresher programs. Lastly, a national survey identified the content of driver refresher programs as well as barriers to providing services to older drivers.

**Results:** Advancing age and associated medical conditions can lead to changes in vision, perceptual skills, attention, memory, decision-making, reaction time, processing speed, and physical abilities. Older driver retraining may result in improvements in general driving knowledge and driving-specific skills. Older adults were interested to refresh knowledge of the rules of the road, understand new car equipment and learn compensatory strategies. Driving programs were not widely available and varied in content. Barriers to participation included stigma associated with attending, cost, and a lack of incentive from licensing bodies or insurance companies. The Blueprint reflected these findings and outlined a national vision, guiding principles, priority goals and directions for action for enhancing fitness-to-drive and safety of older drivers.

**Conclusions:** An urgent need exists for evidence-informed development of policies and services to ready our nation for the growing number of older drivers. The Blueprint defines a strategy for attaining a common vision for older adult utilization of driving practices that prevent injury and promote health, well-being and public safety.

**Implications for occupational therapists:** Occupational therapists are the designated leaders in developing and implementing effective driving interventions for healthy older drivers. The actions undertaken to enable this role will be highlighted.