



## News Release

### *For Immediate Release*

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## What does an aging population mean for road safety in North Carolina?

**Raleigh, N.C. – February 27, 2017** – According to a recent report by the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of Americans 65 years and older will grow by more than 20 percent over the next five years, and by the year 2020, nearly one out of every five drivers will be over the age of 65.

TRIP, a national transportation research group, reported that 18 percent of North Carolina's traffic fatalities involved at least one driver that was at least 65 years of age.

In an environment where a growing population of senior drivers accounts for a disproportionate amount of traffic fatalities, road safety for all drivers is becoming increasingly important.

"Driver safety is an important issue for all segments of the driving population," said Russ Dubisky, a spokesman for the Insurance Federation of North Carolina (IFNC). "Insurance companies and other membership organizations offer driver safety courses for aging adults as well as teen drivers, and some insurers may even offer a discount for the successful completion of approved courses."

Here are a few safety tips for any driver, and especially for senior drivers.

**Avoid dangerous driving conditions** – If possible, try to avoid driving in inclement weather when visibility may be limited, or roadways may be wet or slick. Driving at night and during rush hour can also be dangerous, especially if your vision is impaired.

**Improve your driving position** – Make sure your seat is positioned to put you in the proper driving position. This will help you comfortably and easily reach the steering wheel, see over the front of your vehicle, see your side mirrors, and easily reach the gas pedal and brake.

### **Tips to make sure you are in the right position:**

- Keep the steering wheel at a comfortable but significant distance from your chest.
  - If the steering wheel is too close, it could result in an injury should an airbag deploy.
- Raise the height of the seat so that your eyes are a few inches above the steering wheel.
  - You can do this by:
    - Adjusting the steering wheel itself.
    - Adjusting the height of your seat.
    - Sitting on an additional seat cushion, if necessary.
- Move your side mirrors to avoid blind spots.

- Raise or lower the headrest so that it is directly behind your head.

**Consider taking a mature driver course** – Completing a driver training course can help you learn defensive driving techniques, updated state laws, and help you make right-of-way decisions. Improving your driving skills can improve your confidence and help keep you safe behind the wheel.

*For more information from the Insurance Federation of North Carolina, or to schedule an interview, call (919)539-1375.*

*The Insurance Federation of North Carolina (IFNC) is a trade association established in 2004 by the leading property and casualty insurance companies doing business in North Carolina. IFNC serves as the voice for the industry on legislative and regulatory matters and promotes consumer awareness on issues of importance to the property and casualty insurance industry.*

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