

## WHEN TO TAKE AWAY MOM OR DAD'S CAR

One of the toughest decisions an adult child has to make is to take away their parents cars.



I have had personal experience, and I know it is a traumatic and painful experience for both child and parent. But I also know that by the time the child decides to take the car, mom or dad have probably placed themselves and others in danger while driving. According to NHSTA (National Highway Safety Transportation Administration) stats, older drivers are more likely to get in multiple vehicle accidents than younger drivers and car accidents are more dangerous for younger people. The elderly are more likely to receive traffic tickets for failure to yield, turning improperly, running red lights and stop signs, all indications of decreased driving ability.

Everyone ages differently, and some people are perfectly capable of driving safely well into their eighties. However, it is important that you keep a careful eye on mom or dad's ability to drive as they age. Many of the following warning signs of unsafe driving can add up to a decision to ask mom or dad to quit driving:

- Abrupt lane changes, braking or acceleration
- Drifting into other lanes
- Driving on wrong side of road, or on the shoulder
- Dents or scrapes on the car
- Missing highway exits
- Range of motion issues (looking over shoulder, turning head)
- Trouble moving foot from gas pedal to brake, or confusing the two pedals
- Oblivious to frustration of other drivers; not understanding why they are honking
- Getting lost more often
- Having trouble paying attention to signals, road signs, pavement markings or pedestrian

I know from my own experience, I should have been more watchful both of my in-laws driving and my parents driving; for instance, I now remember how my father in law, had a "flat tire" while hitting the curb to our subdivision entrance; how he later got "lost" coming to our house, a place he had been to hundreds of time before; later, he got lost going just a couple of miles from his house in Lilburn, ending up in an accident in Riverdale!

I also know that I should have seen warning signs from my mother: I noticed a couple of scratches and dents on her car, and she was unable to tell me where they came from; she got two tickets in a week for "stopping on the railroad crossing" in Duluth; while following her one day, I noticed she would

accelerate rapidly, then slow down; and would do this several times. So, the first step in making a decision on whether to take the car is to **BE OBSERVANT!**

I plan on writing more about this on my blog; however, the following are a short list of steps you can take if you are concerned about your elderly parent's driving;

- Encourage a driving evaluation through the Department of Driver's Services or through an approved course from AARP. [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)
- Explore ways to limit driving; perhaps begin by limiting driving to the grocery store or church
- If necessary get the support and advice from the elderly adult's doctor, or support group
- If necessary, you might try getting the physician to notify Driver Services that the elderly parent's license should be suspended for medical reasons. The forms can be obtained on the Georgia Driver's Services Website: [www.dds.ga.gov](http://www.dds.ga.gov)

As America ages, experts are trying to devise methods which will objectively tell someone when they should stop driving. I read an article in the Atlanta Journal the other day where scientists are creating tests to show when it's time for people with early Alzheimer's disease to stop driving. More research is needed, but the goal is to have an easy doctor's office exam to help guide when patients should give up the keys.

Even if the doctor says, "give up driving", I know from personal experience that mom or dad might not give up the car without pitching a fit; but for the public's safety, sometimes the hard decisions need to be made.

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## FREE TAXI SERVICE A SUCCESS!

On Saturday, March 14, 2009, I sponsored my second annual free taxi (actually limo) service for patrons enjoying St. Patrick's Day at The Loafing Leprechaun [www.loafingleprechaun.com](http://www.loafingleprechaun.com).

By all accounts the limo company was swamped for requests by persons choosing to "drink responsibly". I wanted to thank both the folks at Loafing Leprechaun and Zeke at **Atlanta VIP Ride, 866-285-6802**, for making this year's free taxi service such a success.

## 5 REASONS TO DRIVE SLOWER



From one of my favorite sites, <http://zenhabits.net>, here are 5 good reasons for driving slower:

- 1. Save gas.** The best ways to save gas (besides driving less or driving a fuel-efficient vehicle) are to avoid excessive idling, more gradual accelerating and decelerating, and driving slower (see [report on Edmunds.com](#)). With gas prices so high these days, wasting gas by driving unnecessarily fast is something we can't afford.
- 2. Save lives.** Driving fast can kill people (including the driver). Two stats: Traffic is the biggest single killer of 12-16 year olds. Surprisingly, at 35mph you are twice as likely to kill someone you hit as at 30mph. Faster driving gives you a shorter amount of time to respond to something in your path, and even a fraction of a second can mean the difference between life and death. Drive slower for your safety and that of those around you ... especially drive slow around runners, cyclists, schools, and neighborhoods with kids on the streets.
- 3. Save time?** While you think you're saving time by driving faster, it's not a lot of time. And that small amount of time you're saving isn't worth it, considering the other factors on this list. Better yet, start out a few minutes early and you'll arrive at the same time as someone who drove faster but started later, and you'll arrive much happier than that person to boot.
- 4. Save your sanity.** The above three reasons are very important ones, but for me the most noticeable difference has been the huge drop in stress levels when I drive. Far from being a crazy experience, driving is actually a relaxing and pleasant experience now. I no longer get road rage, because I simply don't care whether other drivers are going slow or cutting me off.
- 5. Simplify your life.** This is related to the one above, but expanded. In addition to saving your stress levels, driving slower can reduce many other complications as well — the headache of accidents and speeding tickets, for one, going to the gas station too often, for another, but also the hectic pace of life. Why must we rush through life? Slow down and enjoy life more. If we're always in a hurry to get places, when will we get to our destination and finally be happy? Life is a journey — make it a pleasant one.



Have you checked out my blog?  
[defendingdriversrights.com](http://defendingdriversrights.com)

If you had, you might know about the person who received a DUI "While Driving a Barstool"!

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