

Study finds high rate of fatal crashes in Wisconsin involve elderly drivers



By [Katarina Vergara](#)

Eau Claire, Wis. (WEAU) -- A study shows Wisconsin has the highest rate in the country for fatal crashes involving elderly drivers.

According to TRIP, a national transportation research group, older Americans form a significant proportion of the overall population and a rapidly increasing number and share of licensed drivers. An estimated 46 million Americans are 65 or older, accounting for 15 percent of the total population.

Starting at age 65, the primary danger facing older drivers is their physical fragility, making older drivers much more likely to die when they do crash, says the study.

Their higher instance of fatalities can be attributed to physical fragility that makes surviving a crash less likely than for younger drivers.

While they tend to be more cautious and avoid risks on the road, older drivers may face physical challenges that make driving more difficult, including changes in vision, hearing, reaction time and cognition.

Older drivers typically have good driving skills and few accidents. They also travel fewer miles.

In the face of elevated risks, older drivers tend to be very responsible on the road, with a higher rate of seat belt use than younger drivers, greater avoidance of higher-risk driving environments (such as at night or in rain), and lower likelihood to drink and drive or be otherwise impaired, according to the study.

The Aging and Disability Resource Center in Eau Claire recommends an individual see their physician if they have any questions or concerns about driving.

"We provide resources on having those conversations, having difficult conversations with family members on giving up driving or handing over the keys and changes associated with aging and the potential impacts that has on the driver," says Emily Gilbertson, manager at the ADRC.

For more information, [click here](#).