



OLDER DRIVERS FACTSHEET

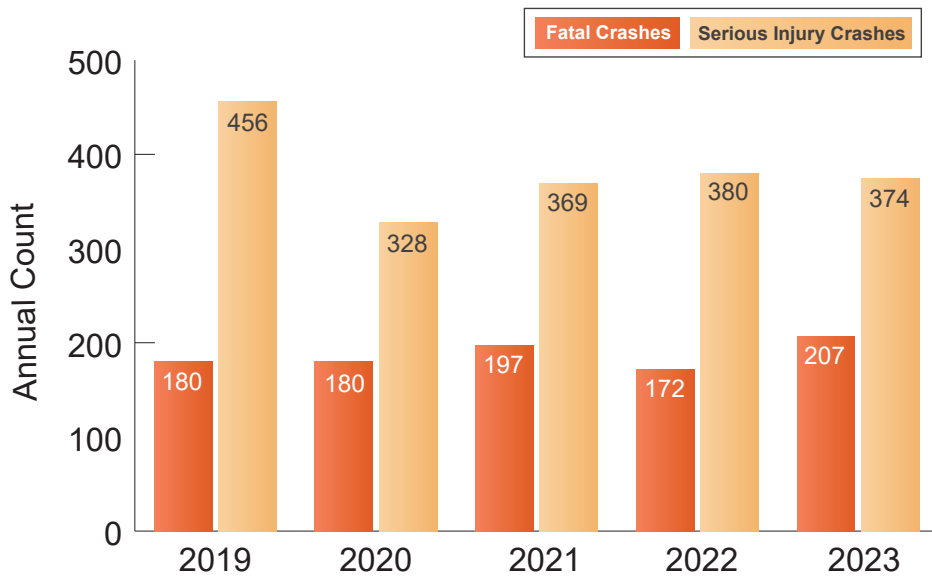
F&SI Crashes = Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes

WHAT IS THE SHSP?

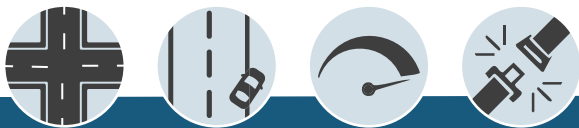
South Carolina’s 2025-2029 SHSP is a statewide, comprehensive safety plan that provides guidance for all statewide transportation safety professionals to coordinate efforts toward a common goal of reducing traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries on South Carolina roadways. The SHSP includes information on ongoing state and national safety programs and highlights achievements of SCDOT and SCDPS to improve roadway safety. Thirteen emphasis areas have been identified as the primary focus of the 2025-2029 SHSP, including Older Drivers.

OLDER DRIVERS OVERVIEW

South Carolina’s transportation system is intended to be easily navigable by all users, including older drivers. Older drivers include all drivers 65 years and older whose age may be affecting their driving ability. Between 2019 and 2023, an average of 567 crashes per year involving older drivers resulted in a fatality or serious injury. **Almost 19% of all fatal crashes and nearly 17% of all serious injury crashes in South Carolina involve older drivers.** SCDOT and SCDPS are committed to protecting older drivers and making sure infrastructure and alternate transportation options support their ability to use the roadway. While older drivers have more years of experience on the roadways, they also are more likely to suffer from cognitive, visual, and physical impairments that affect their driving abilities.



Between 2019 and 2023, an average of 381 serious injury and 187 fatal older driver crashes occurred each year. Over this time period, fatal crashes have increased while serious injury crashes have decreased.



Older Driver F&SI crashes most commonly occur with the following four emphasis areas: Intersections (40.6%), Lane Departure (33.8%), Speeding (21.4%), and Unrestrained (18.7%).



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Crash Statistics (2019–2023)

- Annual average: 187 fatal and 381 serious injury older-driver crashes
- Fatal crashes have increased, while serious injury crashes have decreased over this period
- Older drivers accounted for approximately 23.4% of licensed drivers in 2022, yet were involved in 19% of all crashes that year
- 72% of older-driver crashes occurred during the daytime, though 28% still occurred at night
- Failure to yield right-of-way accounts for nearly 30% of older-driver fatal and serious injury crashes
- Top Contributing Factors:
 - » Failure to Yield (29.9%)
 - » Driving Too Fast for Conditions (17.1%)
 - » Disregarded Signs/Signals (7.9%)
 - » Under the Influence (7.9%)
 - » Wrong Side/Wrong Way (7.0%)

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- **Education**
 - » Implement NHTSA's Model Driver Screening and Evaluation Program for testing older drivers
 - » Implement a safety/educational campaign through media, marketing, and/or social media, informing older roadway users on in-vehicle technologies, modern engineering designs, and safety-enhancing infrastructure
- **Enforcement**
 - » Establish effective referral of older drivers to licensing agencies by providing appropriate educational materials to law enforcement agencies and physicians.
 - » Increase awareness of safety belt use for older drivers and passengers and enforce safety belt use laws
- **Engineering**
 - » Use proven design practices, such as Federal Highway Administration Handbook for Designing Roadways for the Aging Population



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Daytime travel dominates older-driver crashes, but nighttime conditions still contribute to nearly one-third of crashes
- Right-of-way conflicts are the leading contributor to older-driver fatal and serious injury crashes
- Intersections represent the strongest overlap with older-driver crashes, emphasizing the complexity of intersection decision-making
- Older drivers experience fewer weekend crashes than other emphasis areas, with the lowest crash totals on Saturdays and Sundays