

## (If voluntary agreement can't be reached) 8 Ways to Stop an Elderly Person From Driving

### **1. Anonymously report them to the DMV**

The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) allows people to report unsafe drivers, often anonymously. You don't have to be a doctor; anyone can file a report. The benefit is that your older adult won't blame you for taking their license away. Instead, they'll be angry with the DMV.

Each state's DMV has different procedures. Typically, when someone is reported as an unsafe driver, they're called in for a driver's license retest - regardless of when their license expires. Contact your local DMV to find out what is needed in your state to request a retest. If you don't feel comfortable filing a DMV report, speak confidentially with their doctor and share your concerns. Ask the doctor to write a letter that you can take to the DMV.

### **2. Use Alzheimer's or dementia forgetfulness to your advantage**

Alzheimer's or Dementia can cause seniors to become irrational and stubborn about driving. In these situations, an effective strategy may be to remove the car and any reminders of driving. At the same time, creatively distract them from the topic until they forget about driving altogether. This approach spares them from angry confrontations or getting depressed about not being allowed to drive.

### **3. Have a relative or close friend "borrow" the car**

If your older adult's car isn't in the garage, they won't be able to drive it. To keep them from getting suspicious, you could arrange for a relative or close friend to borrow the car.

For example, the relative could pretend that their own car is in the shop for major repairs. If it's a young relative, they could say they need a car for school or a job. When the car is out of sight or unavailable for a good reason, your older adult may be more willing to give up driving. You don't have to actually give the car away, that's just a cover story to get the car out of their sight. After that, it's your decision to keep, sell, or give away the car.

### **4. Hide or "lose" the car keys**

Another way to keep your older adult from driving is to hide the car keys or pretend they're lost. It's best to do this while they're asleep so they won't suspect that you've taken them. If they ask you where the keys are, pretend that you have no idea. You could even help them look and after searching the house, declare the keys hopelessly lost. Say that you'll get a new set, but it could take a while.

### **5. Take the car for repairs**

Pretending that the car is having a problem is another effective method. Tell your older adult that the car is at the auto shop for repairs. This gets the car away from the house – similar to having a relative borrow it.

Your senior may ask why the car has been in the shop for so long. Be prepared to say something like:

- A repair part hasn't arrived yet
- The repairs cost more than the car is worth
- The mechanic says the car can't be fixed

## **6. Disable the car**

A good way to prevent someone from driving is to disable their car. Do something simple like unplugging the battery or locking the steering wheel with a "Club." Even if they managed to get the keys, they still wouldn't be able to drive a disabled car.

## **7. Sell the car**

Selling their car is another way of making sure your older adult can no longer drive. Make up a story for why this is necessary. For example, you might say that a close relative needs money and this is the only way to help. You don't have to actually sell the car if you don't want to, but this is another way to get it out of sight for a seemingly legitimate reason.

## **8. Hide your own car and car keys**

If your car is still available, your older adult might try to take your keys and drive your car. If that's happening, make sure to hide your own keys and park your car out of their sight. Whenever you need to go out, you can say that a friend is giving you a ride or that you're taking public transportation.

### **Bottom Line:**

If your older adult refuses to stop driving, you might be forced to use these methods. They might seem extreme, but they're effective. Many seniors give up the fight when their driver's license is revoked. Others will give up the fight after you use some of these creative ways to get rid of or disable their car. It may take some time, so be prepared to stick with your story. The most important thing is that your older adult will be safely off the roads.

**Note:** Don't feel guilty. You are not betraying an elderly spouse or loved one by using the suggestions shown above. What you are really doing is protecting their safety, as well as that of pedestrians and other drivers. Remember, however, that taking away an older adult's driving privileges can be traumatic and even cause depression. This is a huge adjustment late in life.

Losing the ability to drive deals a significant blow to one's independence. They are no longer able to get to church, go the supermarket, drop by the park for some sunshine or visit friends whenever they feel like it. Instead, they will have to rely on other methods of transportation to do the things they need and want to do.

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