

License Renewal Requirements for Older Drivers

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Issue

Can Connecticut implement mandatory driver evaluations for older drivers to ensure they are still able to drive safely? Have there been any past legislative attempts to introduce and pass a bill regarding this matter?

Summary

Connecticut currently has no special testing requirements or restrictions specific to older drivers, although it allows anyone age 65 or older to renew his or her license for a two-year period, rather than the usual six-year period, or a period, up to eight years, as determined by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) commissioner ([CGS § 14-41a](#)). However, nothing would preclude the state from implementing mandatory driver evaluations for older drivers, as several other states already do. A search of fully drafted legislative proposals that had a public hearing for the past decade did not identify any recent action on this topic.

Regardless of a driver's age, state law authorizes the DMV commissioner to issue licenses with any limitation she deems advisable. The law also allows, but does not require, certain medical professionals to report to DMV the name, age, and address of anyone they find to have health problems that will significantly affect his or her ability to drive safely. These reports are confidential, and apply to any driver, regardless of age.

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), most states have one or more driver's license renewal provisions specific to older drivers. Some impose restrictions based on an assessment of older drivers, which may include no driving on high-speed roads, outside of a certain area, or at night. Drivers may also be subject to evaluations by licensing agencies on referrals from

police, physicians, family, or observations by personnel at licensing offices. Licensing agencies may also require applicants, regardless of age, to take physical or mental tests, or to retake the standard vision, written, or road test. States usually have medical review boards that advise agencies on individual cases.

License Renewals in Connecticut

DMV Commissioner's Authority

By law, the DMV commissioner may require any license applicant or license holder with a health problem that affects his or her ability to drive safely to personally demonstrate or otherwise show that he or she can properly operate a motor vehicle. The commissioner may require this of anyone, regardless of age. She also may require a certificate of the applicant's condition, signed by a medical authority whom the commissioner designates. The commissioner must keep the certificate confidential.

The commissioner may issue or renew a license with limitations she deems advisable, or, in the case of someone she finds is unable to drive safely, refuse to issue or suspend his or her license ([CGS § 14-36\(e\)\(4\)](#)). State regulations require the commissioner, in issuing a limited license, to consider a person's ability and competence, including his or her health problems or conditions, accident record, and driving history. She also must consider any recommendation made by (1) a physician who has examined the person and (2) the DMV Medical Advisory Board.

Whenever the commissioner has reason to believe that a person's license should be limited, she may require him or her to take a DMV driving test to determine his or her ability to operate a vehicle safely. She must consider the test results in deciding whether to place any limits on the person's license. The license holder may be limited to driving only:

1. during daylight hours (one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset);
2. when wearing corrective lenses, except for telescopic lenses, prescribed by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist;
3. on roads other than limited access highways;
4. a motor vehicle with an automatic transmission;
5. a motor vehicle equipped with external mirrors located on both sides of the vehicle to reflect a view of the roadway at least 200 feet to the rear;
6. a motor vehicle having special controls or equipment; or
7. when wearing a working hearing aid.

A limited license may contain one or more of these limitations, which must be indicated on the license (Conn. Agencies Regs. §§ 14-36-4 and 14-36a-2).

Reporting by Medical Professionals

By law, a physician, physician assistant, or advance practice registered nurse may report to DMV, in writing, the name, age, and address of anyone he or she diagnoses to have (1) a chronic health problem which in the medical professional's opinion will significantly affect the driver's ability to drive safely, or (2) recurrent periods of unconsciousness uncontrolled by medical treatment. Similarly, an optometrist may report to DMV, in writing, the name, age, and address of anyone the optometrist knows to have a vision problem which in the optometrist's judgment will significantly affect the person's ability to drive safely. The law applies to all drivers, regardless of age. These reports are confidential and can be used only to determine whether someone is eligible to drive on state roads. No civil action may be brought against someone who provides such a report in good faith ([CGS § 14-46](#)).

License Renewal Requirements in Other States

According to the IIHS, most states have one or more driver's license renewal provisions specific to older drivers, like shorter renewal cycles (e.g., Arizona, Hawaii, and Illinois), require vision or road testing, and in-person renewal rather than online renewal or by mail. The ages at which these additional requirements apply vary by state, as outlined in the Table below.

According to IIHS data, nineteen states require a shorter cycle for older drivers, at varying ages ranging from 63 years (Idaho) to 85 years (Texas). Only four states, including Connecticut, offer a shorter renewal cycle for older drivers as a voluntary option. Slightly more than half of all states, and the District of Columbia, have one uniform license renewal cycle regardless of driver age.

Nineteen states require vision testing of older drivers at every renewal, beginning at varying ages ranging from 40 years (Maryland) up to 79 years (Texas). Oregon is the only state of this group that allows an exception – only drivers 50 years and older must take a vision test, but only for in-person renewals. Twenty-four states and the District of Columbia require vision tests of all drivers at every renewal, every other renewal, or a set period (e.g., 10 years, or during all in-person renewals). Only seven states (AL, CT, MS, OK, PA, TN, and VT) do not require a vision test at renewal for any drivers.

Seventeen states cap the age at which a person can renew a license online or by mail and instead require in-person license renewals, beginning as young as age 62 in Maine and up to age 79 in Texas. In contrast, six states (AZ, AR, DE, MN, MO, and WI) do not offer mail or online renewals regardless of the driver's age.

Table 1: General vs. Older Population License Renewal Procedures by State

State	License Renewal Cycle		Proof of Adequate Vision Required at Renewal		Mail or Online Renewal Permitted	
	General Population	Older Population	General Population	Older Population	General Population	Older Population
AL	4 years	4 years	No	No	Online, every other renewal	Online, every other renewal
AK	5 years	5 years	When renewing in person	69 and older, every renewal	Both, every other renewal	Not permitted 69 and older
AZ	12 years	5 years for people 65 and older	Every renewal	Every renewal	No	No
AR	8 years	4 or 8 years for people 70 and older, personal option	Every other renewal	Every other renewal	No	No
CA	5 years	5 years	When renewing in person	70 and older, every renewal	Both, limited to 2 consecutive renewals	Not permitted 70 and older
CO	5 years	5 years	Every renewal	Every renewal	Both, if photograph is newer than 16 years	Both, if photograph is newer than 16 years
CT	8 or 6 years, phasing from a 6 year to 8-year cycle	2 years permitted for people 65 and older, personal option	No	No	Both, every other renewal	Both, every other renewal
DE	8 years	8 years	Every renewal	Every renewal	No	No
DC	8 years	8 years	Every renewal	Every renewal	Both, every other renewal	Not permitted 70 and older
FL	8 years	6 years for people 80 and older	When renewing in person	80 and older, every renewal	Both, every other renewal	Both, every other renewal
GA	8 years	8 years	Every renewal	Every renewal	Both, every other renewal	Both, every other renewal
HI	8 years	2 years for people 72 and older	Every renewal	Every renewal	By mail, limited to 2 consecutive renewals, but must appear in person at least every 16 years	By mail, limited to 2 consecutive renewals, but must appear in person at least every 16 years

Table 1 (continued)

License Renewal Cycle			Proof of Adequate Vision Required at Renewal		Mail or Online Renewal Permitted	
State	General Population	Older Population	General Population	Older Population	General Population	Older Population
ID	4 or 8 years, personal option	4 years for people 63 and older	Every renewal	Every renewal	By mail, every other renewal; must choose 4-year license	Not permitted 70 and older
IL	4 years	2 years for people 81 - 86; 1 year for people 87 and older	When renewing in person	75 and older, every renewal	Both, every other renewal	Not permitted 75 and older
IN	6 years	3 years for people 75-84: 2 years for people 85 and older	When renewing in person	75 and older, every renewal	Both, every other renewal	Both, every other renewal
IA	8 years or 80th birthday, whichever occurs first	2 years for people 78 and older	When renewing in person	70 and older, every renewal	Online, every other renewal	Not permitted 70 and older
KS	6 years	4 years for people 65 and older	Every renewal	Every renewal	Online, every other renewal	Not permitted 65 and older
KY	4 or 8 years, personal option	4 or 8 years, personal option	Every renewal	Every renewal	Both, if photograph is newer than 16 years	Both, if photograph is newer than 16 years
LA	6 years	6 years	When renewing in person	70 and older, every renewal	Both, every other renewal	Not permitted 70 and older
ME	6 years	4 years for people 65 and older	First renewal after 40 and every other renewal until 62	62 and older, every renewal	Both, unless proof of vision required	Not permitted 62 and older
MD	8 years	8 years	When renewing in person	40 and older, every renewal	Both, if photograph is newer than 16 years	Both, if photograph is newer than 16 years

Table 1 (continued)

License Renewal Cycle			Proof of Adequate Vision Required at Renewal		Mail or Online Renewal Permitted	
State	General Population	Older Population	General Population	Older Population	General Population	Older Population
MA	5 years	5 years	When renewing in person	75 and older, every renewal	Online, every other renewal	Not permitted 75 and older
MI	4 years	4 years	When renewing in person	When renewing in person	Both, every other renewal	Both, every other renewal
MN	4 years	4 years	Every renewal	Every renewal	No	No
MS	4 or 8 years, personal option	4 or 8 years, personal option	No	No	Online, every other renewal	Online, every other renewal
MO	6 years	3 years for people 70 and older	Every renewal	Every renewal	No	No
MT	12 years or 75th birthday, whichever occurs first	4 years for people 75 and older	Every renewal	Every renewal	Both, every other renewal	Both, every other renewal
NE	5 years	5 years	When renewing in person	72 and older, every renewal	Online, every other renewal	Not permitted 72 and older
NV	4 years (odd number birth years); 8 years (even number birth years); 8 years all licenses starting in 2018	4 years for people 65 and older	When renewing in person	71 and older, every renewal	Both, every other renewal; available only for holders of a 4-year license	Both, every other renewal for people 65 and older
NH	5 years	5 years	Every renewal	Every renewal	Online, every other renewal	Online, every other renewal
NJ	4 years	2 or 4 years for people 70 and older, personal option	Every 10 years	Every 10 years	Both, unless new photo required	Both

Table 1 (continued)

License Renewal Cycle			Proof of Adequate Vision Required at Renewal		Mail or Online Renewal Permitted	
State	General Population	Older Population	General Population	Older Population	General Population	Older Population
NM	4 or 8 years, personal option	4 years for people 71-78; 1 year for people 79 and older	When renewing in person	75 and older, every renewal	Online, every other renewal; by mail, unless new photo required	Not permitted 75 and older
NY	8 years	8 years	Every renewal	Every renewal	Both	Both
NC	8 years	5 years for people 66 and older	Every renewal	Every renewal	Online, every other renewal	Online, every other renewal
ND	6 years	4 years for people 78 and older	Every renewal	Every renewal	Both, every other renewal	Not permitted 70 and older
OH	4 or 8 years, personal option	4 years for people 65 and older	When renewing in person	65 and older, every renewal	Online, every other renewal if applying for a 4-year license	Not permitted 65 and older
OK	4 or 8 years, personal option	4 or 8 years, personal option	No	No	Both, every other renewal	Both, every other renewal
OR	8 years	8 years	No	50 and older if renewing in person	Online, every other renewal	Online, every other renewal
PA	4 years	2 years or 4 years for people 65 and older, personal option	No	No	Both	Both
RI	5 years	2 years for people 75 and older	Every renewal	Every renewal	Online, every other renewal	Online, every other renewal
SC	8 years	8 years	Every renewal	Every renewal	Both	Both
SD	5 years	5 years	When renewing in person	65 and older, every renewal	Both, every other renewal	Both, every other renewal
TN	8 years	8 years	No	No	Both	Both
TX	8 years	2 years for people 85 and older	When renewing in person	79 and older, every renewal	Both, every other renewal	Not permitted 79 and older

Table 1 (continued)

License Renewal Cycle			Proof of Adequate Vision Required at Renewal		Mail or Online Renewal Permitted	
State	General Population	Older Population	General Population	Older Population	General Population	Older Population
UT	8 years	8 years	When renewing in person	65 and older, every renewal	Online, every other renewal	Online, every other renewal
VT	2 or 4 years	2 or 4 years	No	No	By mail, unless new photo required	By mail, unless new photo required
VA	8 years	5 years for people 75 and older	When renewing in person	75 and older, every renewal	Both, every other renewal	Not permitted 75 and older
WA	6 or 8 years, personal option	6 or 8 years, personal option	Every renewal	Every renewal	Both, every other renewal	Not permitted 70 and older
WV	8 years	8 years	Every renewal	Every renewal	Online, every other renewal	Online, every other renewal
WI	8 years	8 years	Every renewal	Every renewal	No	No
WY	5 years	5 years	Every renewal	Every renewal	By mail, every other renewal	By mail, every other renewal

Source: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety <https://www.iihs.org/topics/older-drivers/license-renewal-laws-table>, as of August 2022. *Due to COVID-19, many states have made temporary operational changes which may or may not still be in effect.

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