

Intersections dangerous for older drivers

Poor vision, slower reactions blamed for increased wreck risks after age 80

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A study suggest the oldest drivers have the hardest time dealing with intersections.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety studied a number of wrecks at intersections It found that once a driver reaches the age of 80, the chances of having a wreck by pulling into traffic increases dramatically.

Institute researcher Anne McCartt says 37 percent of the crashes involving drivers 70 to 79 years old were blamed on failure to yield, meaning the driver pulled out into traffic.

She says that percentage jumps to 58 percent for drivers 80 and older.

McCartt says there could be a number of factors for the increase, including slower reaction time, some confusion and poorer eyesight.

The Institute is recommending more left turn lanes and arrows at intersections and roundabouts, which not only slow oncoming traffic — they also have traffic flowing in the same direction.

The researchers looked at nonfatal intersection crashes in Connecticut during 2003 and 2004.

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