

Hazard: Seniors Behind The Wheel

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(CBS) *This is part four of a CBS Evening News series: The Road Ahead.*

The reason Ferris Wallace can still glide across a dance floor and still play hearts everyday is because at the age of 92, Wallace is still behind the wheel.

"Well people my age, if you're able to drive you're just darn lucky is all I can say," Wallace told **CBS News correspondent Hari Sreenivasan**.

But for some elderly drivers, it could be dangerous.

As baby boomers age, the percentage of older drivers involved in fatal crashes is expected to climb from just 14 percent two years ago to 25 percent by the year 2030.

Rick and Johnna Bolka lost their artistic 17-year-old daughter, Katie, when her car was broadsided by one driven by 90-year-old Elizabeth Grimes.

"I'm terribly sorry, but I did it," Grimes said in court.

In her deposition, Grimes admitted she ran a red light. After the Bolkas buried their daughter, they crusaded to enact Katie's law.

"We're happy that other people will be safe, but honestly you know, angry that it had to take, you know, my child to die to have all this happen," Johnna Bolka said.

Starting in September, Texas drivers older than 85 must review their licenses every two years. Drivers over the age of 79 must renew their licenses in person.

But few states are going that far.

Only 17 states require older drivers to renew their licenses more often than other drivers. Just eight states and the District of Columbia require vision tests for license renewals. And just eight states do the one thing that is proven to reduce deaths of drivers over age 85 — mandate they renew their licenses in person.

 [Find out the law for seniors in your state.](#)

"You turned without using a turn signal three times," **Sreenivasan** told a senior driver at one simulator class.

"I'm blaming all that on you; you're the one distracting me," the driver replied.

To refresh older drivers, there are courses like one by the AARP.

A chain of senior wellness centers offers simulators and exercise.

"Brain fitness is encouraged by physical fitness," said Dr. Sheldon Zinberg, founder of Nifty After Fifty, said. "Physical fitness has been shown to improve driver abilities in the older driver.

But deciding when those driving abilities are gone is mostly up to the older drivers themselves.

"The day I can't handle it I'm gonna hang up the keys," Wallace said.

Those keys may be in his hands for six more years. Wallace got his license renewed before Katie's Law kicks in, meaning he won't face a driving test until he is 98 years old.

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