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New Licensing Law Takes Effect

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 [New Rules For Older Drivers In Texas](#)

Starting this week, law enforcement will be keeping a closer eye on some drivers behind the wheel in Texas. That's because Katie's Law is now in effect and changes the way licenses are renewed.

For certain drivers, Katie's Law means another immediate requirement to first prove they can still drive safely. For the rest of us, Katie's Law may be the first step in tightening how we all renew our licenses.

Katie's Law is named after Katie Bolka, a 17 year old Dallas teenager killed by a 90 year old driver.

Investigators say nearly half of all fatal accidents involving drivers over 70, happen at intersections. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, it happens for two reasons. First, older drivers have slower reactions, and secondly, many suffer from vision problems.

Katie's Law now requires drivers 79 and older to come to Department of Public Safety Offices to renew their licenses in person, giving DPS an opportunity to check their road worthiness.

For the McGuire family, Katie's Law has a very personal meaning.

"It doesn't really bother me," Annelle McGuire said. "It means I'll have to take a test this next time which will be next year. If I can't pass it, I don't need to be driving."

Katie's parents use artwork to convey the depth of their loss. They lost a daughter, they say, because a senior didn't want to lose her sense of freedom, even when she was no longer safe behind the wheel.

"As we all age, we probably do need to have a check-up," Karen Keener said. "Do we still have the eyes and the dexterity and all that to still drive?"

"I have a grandmother who's pushing 85 and we're as a family having to deal with taking her driver's license away, which is fine, but it's also very hard on her," Mitchell Hudson said.

For drivers 85 and over, renewals will now have to be every two years, not every six, and they'll need to pass a vision test. Some lawmakers are not talking about similar requirements for the rest of us, depending on our driving records.



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Katie's Law is just one of hundreds of new laws that officially took effect on Saturday. Among them, if you get a ticket for driving more than 95 miles per hour, you can't take a driving safety class to dismiss the citation.

Another brand new law taking effect is called the Castle Doctrine Law. It says, in your own home, you don't have to retreat before you can use deadly force against an intruder.

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