

Driver Safety Program and Procedures



**Sisters of Mercy
Regional Community of Chicago**

February 2002

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Sisters of Mercy, Regional Community of Chicago

Introduction

Driving is a privilege conferred by the state in the form of a driver's license and recognized by the regional community in the use of a community-owned and insured vehicle. Just as the state expects drivers to obey relevant laws and rules of the road, so the regional community expects sister-drivers to cooperate with procedures designed to safeguard and serve the common good.

The central purpose of this "Driver Safety Program and Procedures" is to help each sister to drive for as long as possible within the primary consideration for all drivers – their personal safety and the safety of others. For sister-drivers, this concern for safety comes in the context of community and the realization that the actions of individuals may have consequences for the entire community.

Realities

Through the years, our regional community has been blessed with good drivers who take responsibility for observing traffic laws, cooperating with community procedures, and attending to vehicle maintenance. However, we need to take reasonable precautions in order to maintain this record of safety, continue to qualify for insurance coverage, and avoid possible lawsuits.

Age, health, and performance are the key factors influencing driver safety. Studies indicate that **aging** plays a critical part in decisions about whether to continue, limit, or cease driving. This is true because aging affects key abilities related to driving – vision, hearing, physical reflexes, and mental attentiveness. Vision acuity declines and sensitivity to light glare increases with age. Hearing loss accompanies aging. Age lengthens the time it takes the brain to process information and makes it harder to ignore distractions. Drivers aged 55 and over are involved in more accidents per mile than those aged 30-54, and the number of accidents per mile rises sharply at about age 75.

Health is a second critical factor in temporary and permanent decisions about whether to continue, limit, or cease driving. Major surgeries, certain disease

diagnoses, vision problems, hearing loss, limited mobility, or any condition that causes loss of consciousness or involuntary motion require honest personal assessment and consultation with others in determining if and when a sister-driver may safely resume driving. *In addition, drivers need to be cautious about prescription and over-the-counter drugs that cause drowsiness. Drug interactions, especially between prescription and non-prescription drugs (including herbal medications), can affect alertness and one's ability to operate a vehicle safely.*

Performance is the third key consideration affecting decisions about driving. A record of several accidents or moving traffic violations, as well as illegal actions involving driving, may lead to the immediate termination of driving privileges, temporarily or permanently.

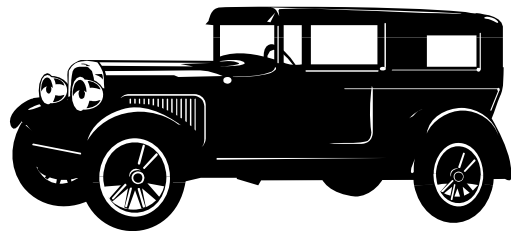
Driver Qualification and Responsibilities

Each Sister of Mercy driver is expected to have a valid license issued by the state in which she resides. She is expected to be familiar with and comply with the rules of the road as set forth by her home state. Sister-drivers are responsible to have their driver's license with them whenever they drive and to renew it in accord with the relevant state's legal requirements and procedures. Sister-drivers are also expected to comply with vehicle licensure and maintenance regulations set by the state in which they reside.

Within these general parameters, there are specific responsibilities which include, but are not limited to the following. Sister-drivers in the Chicago Regional Community are responsible

- to obtain and maintain a valid driver's license;
- to remain informed about and to comply with traffic rules and automobile safety requirements, including the wearing of seat belts by all occupants;
- to retain in the vehicle they use those papers (e.g. insurance card, copy of the vehicle registration, etc.) required by the state in which they reside;
- to comply with state and local regulations regarding vehicle licenses and stickers, emissions tests, and other relevant matters;

- to review the accident procedures information and to retain, for immediate use as needed, the insurance identification card – both of which are provided annually to all sister-drivers by the Regional Community;
- to report accidents, as mandated by law and congregational procedures, to the police and to the person designated by the Regional Community (see next section);
- to maintain the vehicles they use in accord with their vehicle’s manual, thereby providing for both safety and optimal use;
- to limit the use of their vehicle to other sister-drivers or, when an emergency or some other occasion warrants it, only to legally qualified and generally safe drivers personally known to the sister-driver;
- to seek and comply with the advice of physicians regarding temporarily or permanently restricted driving because of various health concerns;
- to exercise concern for personal safety, the safety of others, and the good of the community in assessing their own driving ability and limiting their driving in accord with changing circumstances of health, vision, agility, or mental alertness;
- to consult with regional leadership regarding the sale or purchase of an automobile for their use.



Accident Reporting

For their own protection and for the protection of the Regional Community, as well as for the purpose of complying with legal and insurance requirements, sister-drivers are required to report all accidents.

- Never leave the scene of an accident until the exchange of basic information, as outlined on the insurance card carried by each sister-driver, has been completed.
- A police report should be filed in accord with state law (in Illinois, this means within 10 days) whenever an accident involves another vehicle, other persons, public property, or any property not belonging to the Sisters of Mercy, Regional Community of Chicago.
- In addition, sister-drivers are required to report all accidents to the person designated by the Regional Community. (Currently, that person is Ms. Loretta Tulke or, in her absence, Sister Mary Golden.)

The process of taking an accident report from a sister-driver includes an interview that ascertains the circumstances of the accident, including driver responsibility or fault; advising the sister-driver; and compiling a written report for the Regional Community’s driver files. Ms. Tulke or Sr. Mary will report the accident to the insurance company. (In cases, such as a weekend occurrence where the sister-driver reports the accident to the insurance company directly, she still needs to report it to Ms. Tulke as soon as possible.) Sister-driver accident reports are reviewed periodically (or immediately, if necessary) in order to address safety concerns raised by specific circumstances (nature of the accident, repeat occurrence, concern about the driver, etc.)

Lifelong Driver Safety

To meet their responsibilities for safety and the common good, sister-drivers cooperate with the driver safety procedures established by the Regional Community of Chicago.

- a. **All:** In even-numbered calendar years, each sister-driver will receive a self-assessment form by which to evaluate her driving.
- b. **Age 70:** During the calendar year when a sister-driver becomes 70, she will take a driving refresher course selected from the list maintained by the Regional Center. Annual notices from the Regional Center will provide a reminder to the appropriate sister-drivers.
- c. **Age 75+:** During the calendar year when a sister-driver becomes 75 and every two years thereafter, she will participate in an evaluation of her driving conducted by a professional agency identified by the Regional Center. Annual notices from the Regional Center will provide a reminder to the appropriate sister-drivers. The Regional Center will cover the cost of this evaluation.
- d. **Health:** At any age, a sister-driver with serious medical conditions (temporary or permanent) should consult with her physician about her ability to drive safely. Serious conditions such as those outlined below may also prompt the Regional Leadership Team or their designate to request a medical consult or a driving evaluation. Conditions known to adversely affect driver safety include, but are not limited to, the following, unless or until a physician attests that surgical recovery has reached an appropriate stage or that these diseases or conditions are under control through medication or other compensating means (e.g., hearing aids, contact lenses):
 - Orthopedic, abdominal, ocular, or other major surgeries;
 - Diagnoses of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, dementia including early stage Alzheimer's disease;

- Vision problems such as cataract, glaucoma, or macular degeneration;
- Significant hearing loss;
- Any condition involving seizures, loss of consciousness, recurrent dizziness, limited mobility, or involuntary motion.

If a sister-driver does not wish to comply with these procedures or if the results of medical and/or driving evaluations indicate serious problems, a sister-driver may be required to stop driving.

- e. **Performance:** Sister-drivers with poor driving performance may be asked by the Regional Leadership Team or their designate to take a driving refresher course, to participate in a professional driving evaluation, or to take appropriate medical tests. In these situations, a sister-driver may be asked to authorize release of her state motor vehicle record to the Regional Community. If a sister-driver does not wish to comply with these procedures or if her driving record or the results of medical and/or driving evaluations indicate serious problems, a sister-driver may be required to stop driving.

Other situations that may indicate the need for a refresher course, a professional medical or driving evaluation, or an immediate termination of driving privileges include the following, although this is a non-exhaustive list:

- Three moving violations within three years;
- Three or more accidents within three years;
- Two accidents in which the sister-driver was at fault within two years.

Any single instance of DUI (alcohol or drugs), hit and run, permitting an unlicensed person to drive, driving on a suspended or revoked license, or any criminal charge involving a vehicle will necessitate an immediate suspension of driving privileges and further evaluation or assessment.



Driver Retirement

Who decides that the time has come for a sister-driver to stop driving? The answer, in many cases, is the sister-driver herself. This is the best situation, one coming from an honest assessment of one's skills and recognition of one's responsibility for personal safety, the safety of others, and the good of the community.

Often this decision comes after a period of self-limited driving during which a sister-driver has addressed her responsibility for safe driving by eliminating night driving or long distance driving or bad weather driving or rush hour driving, etc. In other words, she has restricted her driving to avoid situations that make her nervous and therefore more likely to be involved in an accident.

Sometimes, a sister-driver needs the assistance of others to recognize the value of limiting her driving or to come to the difficult decision to stop driving. Friends, local community members, and others in a position to observe a sister-driver's ability should express their concern to the sister-driver. Suggestions about taking a safe driver or defensive driving course may lead the sister-driver to a more objective assessment of her skills. Conversations exploring the possibility that certain health concerns may be affecting a sister-driver's abilities may lead to consultation with a physician and medical testing/remediation. Overall, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is a great guide in this situation. Kindness, tact, and empathy – combined with clarity and truth-telling – can help a sister-driver open herself to the possibility of limiting or ending her driving.

Occasionally, direct intervention by someone in authority is needed to resolve a question of restricting or terminating driving privileges, temporarily or permanently. Such direct intervention usually comes after sisters' and friends' expressions of concern about a sister-driver's safety have been unsuccessful in persuading her to take corrective action. An authoritative intervention is generally handled by the Regional Community's Life Care Coordinator, one of the administrators of a Regional Community retirement center or, ultimately, a member of the Regional Leadership Team.

As a sister-driver faces the decision to stop driving, certain practical considerations can ease the situation.

- She should obtain a government-issued photo ID to replace her driver's license. Most local driver's license facilities offer this service at minimal or no charge to senior citizens and non-drivers. It is best to obtain this photo identification card before a driver's license expires because the driver's license, if still valid, will provide the proof of identity required for issuance of a state ID card. Remember that a government-issued photo ID is almost a necessity in these days of heightened security.
- The sister-driver and/or her friends can identify alternate means of transportation. Non-driving need not and cannot mean staying home. Other sisters and friends can be alert to offer rides; volunteer sister-drivers may be available for occasional local trips. Many civic communities have individualized, inexpensive transportation services for senior citizens. Occasional use of a taxi allows one to attend to ministry or personal affairs, and some taxi companies offer discount rates to seniors. (See Appendix D.)



Appendix A: Driver Refresher Courses

The following organizations offer defensive driving and driver safety courses at little or no cost. Generally, these courses are geared to senior citizens, but the information and skills they review are valuable to drivers of all ages. For information about where and when these courses are available in your geographic area, call the numbers listed below.

AARP's "55 Alive" Course: Phone: 1-888-227-7669
 Website: www.aarp.org/55alive

Illinois Secretary of State's

"Rules of the Road" Course: Call your local state drivers' license facility for date, place, and time of local offerings.

Note: Sisters in Wisconsin, Iowa, and elsewhere may find a similar course available from the governmental agency responsible for drivers' licenses in their state.

National Safety Council's

"Coaching the Mature Driver" Course: Phone: 630-285-1121
 Website: www.nsc.org/training

Appendix B: Driver Assessment Agencies

The Regional Community has made arrangements with the following driving schools to conduct on-the-road assessments of our sister-drivers. These agencies have agreed to use our assessment form and to bill the community directly for their services.

Community Driving School Corporate Office 381 N. York Street Elmhurst, IL 60126 630-617-4350	Community has locations throughout Chicago, its suburbs, and the Aurora area. Appointments at any Community Driving School location can be made through a call to the corporate office.
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Len Scaduto Driving School 4957 W. 95 th Street Oak Lawn, IL 708-423-1212	
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<u>Milwaukee Area</u>	
Easy Method Driving School 414-447-0202	Easy Method has locations throughout Milwaukee.

Appendix C: On-the-Road Assessment Inventory

See following pages.

Note to Instructor: Be familiar with the test route and give directions well in advance. Record remarks as the route is traveled. Check for Satisfactory (S) and Unsatisfactory (U) and add a comment to explain any U assessments..

<u>BEFORE DRIVING</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
1. Uses seat belt			
2. Familiarizes self with vehicle			
3. Checks/adjusts mirrors and seat			
4. Checks traffic conditions before pulling out in traffic			

<u>OPERATING IN TRAFFIC</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
1. Drives with both hands properly positioned on the wheel			
2. Steers smoothly			
3. Maintains speed within posted limits			
4. Adjusts speed to conditions			
5. Checks mirrors often			
6. Follows at a safe distance			
7. Anticipates actions of others			
8. Drives in appropriate lane and does not weave in lane			
9. Turns to check blind spot before changing lanes			
10. Watches for low-profile vehicles (bikes, motorcycles)			
11. Moves out of other drivers' blind spots (cars and trucks)			
12. Uses appropriate defensive driving strategies			
13. Controls speed, able to stop within sight distance			
14. Checks ahead and behind before changing lanes			
15. Signals lane change appropriately			
16. Allows ample space in changing lanes			

<u>INTERSECTIONS</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
1. Yields right of way to others – pedestrians and vehicles			
2. Allows adequate distance to vehicle ahead			
3. Brings vehicle to a full stop			
4. Obeyes traffic signs and signals			
5. Stops behind crosswalk or sign			
6. Checks cross traffic before entering intersection			

<u>TURNING</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
1. Moves into proper lane in advance of turn			
2. Begins turn signal at leas 100 feet before turn			
3. Checks left and right before turning			
4. Maintains proper lane during turn			
5. Cancels turn signal			
6. Moves into proper lane after turning			
7. Makes U-turns only where permitted			

<u>BACKING</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
1. Checks ahead, behind, and to the side before backing up			
2. Looks behind while backing			
3. Backs slowly and smoothly			
4. Is attentive to all round movement of car, front & back			

<u>PARKING</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
1. Parks with relative ease			
2. Checks for pedestrians & traffic before pulling out of parking place			

<u>PHYSICAL ABILITIES</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
1. Vision			
2. Hearing			
3. Mobility			
4. Reflexes			
5. Attentiveness			

<u>EXPRESSWAY</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
1. Checks ahead and behind to merge into traffic			
2. Signals merge & lane changes			
3. Maintains appropriate speed			
4. Follows at a safe distance			
5. Uses good judgment in deciding to pass			
6. Turns to check blind spot before merging or changing lanes			
7. Allows ample space before cutting back into lane			
8. Makes pass safely			
9. Uses appropriate defensive driving strategies			

NOTE

Sister _____ reported to me (instructor) that she restricts her driving in the following ways: No night driving; No expressway driving; Driving in local area only; No rush hour driving; No or limited left hand turns; Other _____

SUMMARY

These are my key observations and recommendations, based on this on-the-road assessment.

Observations

Individual Safety Recommendations

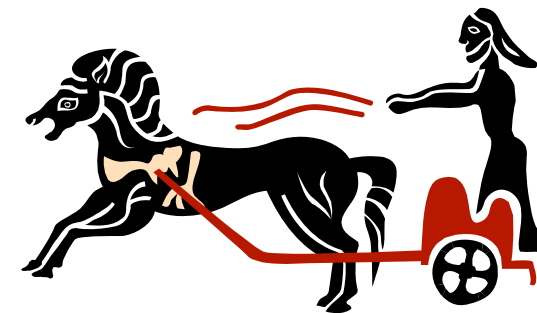
Overall Recommendation re: Sister _____ safety & skill as a driver.
 Driver's full name

 Assessor's Signature

 Date

APPENDIX D: ALTERNATE TRANSPORTATION

	Chicago Area	Aurora Area	Milwaukee Area
City Bus	CTA/RTA 312-836-7800	Pace 847-836-7000	Milwaukee County Transit 414-344-6711
Metra Trains	Metra 312-322-6774	Metra 630-820-7408	
Senior/Handicapped Services 1 week in advance	Dial-A-Ride 847-364-7223	Dial-A-Ride 8 AM – 4:30 PM 630-892-1999	Transit Plus (County wide) 414-343-1700
Taxi Cabs <i>Ask about senior citizen discount rates or coupons.</i>	Yellow Cab 312-829-4222	Montgomery Cab (most reputable) 630-844-9778	American Cab (\$2.50 each way) 414-220-5000
Mercy Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local sisters and associates are often willing to provide a ride for events that they'd be attending themselves or for an occasional outing. ▪ Contact Sister Maria O'Leary (773-779-6011 x27) for current information on sisters/associates who have volunteered as occasional drivers. 		



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Adapted, with permission, from the SSSF inventory