



Tips for Driving Elders

If you have a family member or friend who is older, you may find yourself transporting them in your car. Here are some suggestions for a safer transport.

Getting In

- For safety reasons, step stools and wheelchairs should not to be used for getting in and out of the vehicle. The elder may use a walker or cane.
- The elder needs to be able to get in your vehicle with little to no assistance from you, other than verbal cues. Point out any grab rail or strap.
- If your vehicle has fabric seats (not leather), it may help to have a plastic garbage bag on the seat to help the person pivot on the seat.
- Have the seat positioned as far back as it can go when getting in or out.
- Suggest that the elder turns first to sit down on the seat, rather than have them stepping into the car sideways. Prompt them to place their hands on the dashboard and/or the back of the seat for support.
- Have the elder swing their legs into the car. Please do not assist lifting their legs into the car to prevent injury.

Dealing with Seat Belts

- Ask the elder if they need help with the seat belt. If so, provide a "running commentary" on what you're doing. *"Let me get the short end of the belt, and I'll buckle this end into it. Now I'll adjust the shoulder strap for you. Is that comfortable? Not too tight?"*

Getting Out of the Car

- Have the seat positioned as far back as it can go.
- Have the elder swing their legs out of the car. Avoid assisting them to lift their legs out of the car.
- If a walker or cane is required, make sure it is available before the elder stands.

Source: DARTS

Little Brothers - Friends of the Elderly has provided one-on-one companionship services, advocacy and social activities for isolated and lonely older adults in the Twin Cities since 1972. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, LBFE has been recognized by the Charities Review Council for meeting its 27 Accountability Standards. More information about LBFE can be found at littlebrothersmn.org.

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