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# 50+ Newsletter



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New Brunswick Senior Citizens Federation

www.nbscf.ca 

## Driving after a dementia diagnosis Tips for discussing retiring from driving and the procedure for having a license revoked in New Brunswick

Driving involves complex skills such as attention, memory and quick reflexes. These are weakened by dementia and may make it unsafe for someone to keep driving.

In New Brunswick, the law requires medical professionals to report drivers who might be unsafe because of certain conditions.

### When to stop driving?

Individuals with moderate to severe dementia are advised to stop driving but many people experiencing early stages of dementia may still be able to hold a license.

### Some signs to look for include:

- Medications that might affect the ability to drive due to drowsiness, dizziness or other side effects.
- Near accidents or traffic violations
- Difficulty merging or changing lanes
- Getting lost frequently even in familiar areas
- Driving too slowly
- Being honked at by others regularly
- Confusing brakes, pedals and clutch

### Revoking a license in New Brunswick

Health-care professionals are mandated to report concerns to the Registrar of Motor

Vehicles. Family members and police officers are also able to report if the person living with dementia is in an accident or has a traffic violation.

To make a written complaint about a person's driving you will need:

- Details about your concerns and the dates of these incidents or observations.
- Name, date of birth and address of the driver.
- Your name, date of birth and address.
- Must be signed and dated.

The Department of Justice and Public Safety can suspend their license until the decision is made regarding their abilities. The process may involve a road test or other exams for the reported individual.

### Broaching the subject of retiring from driving

- Start the conversation early so that the person living with dementia has time to accept the decision to stop driving.
- Practise empathy and acknowledge the importance of independence and the difficulty of making the decision.
- Provide evidence of issues you have noticed with their driving performance to help validate the decision.
- Include assessments to support the decision, like the guide from the Alzheimer's Society (2019)

- Discuss it with their primary health care provider so they can initiate the conversation at the next appointment.
- They may try to highlight their driving history. Acknowledge their accomplishments but redirect their focus to the present and the need to stop driving now.
- Suggest a trial period where they can test public transport or arrangements with family or friends to maintain independence. Many urban centers offer senior bus passes for a discounted rate.
- Look into other services for transportation, NB 2-1-1 and Urban/Rural Rides are great resources for finding transportation in your area.
- Research delivery options in your area for groceries, prescriptions, and other necessities.
- Use positive language that reinforces the desire to see them safe and happy. Tell them that they can still enjoy their freedom, but you want them to get there safely.

**This discussion will be difficult** no matter how it is brought up, or by whom. It is best to go into the conversation with compassion and understanding to help them prepare for the day they retire from driving.



URBAN/RURAL RIDES  
TRANSPORT URBAIN/RURAL

## NB government invests \$2 million for public transit software

The New Brunswick Regional Development Corporation announced funding of \$2 million over four years to support the development of a provincial-wide volunteer community transportation program.

Thanks to financial support from the New Brunswick government, the Urban/Rural Rides organization will be able to implement on-demand public transportation software for seniors and low-income people.

Urban/Rural Rides currently offers a volunteer driving service in five regions of the province, but the software will make it possible to deploy it to the 12 regional service commissions in the province.

The province selected Montreal-based artificial intelligence-focused company Blair Transit to provide

the software. Its mission is to help guarantee safe, accessible and high-quality transport for all.

The general director of Urban/Rural Rides, Kelly Taylor, is enthusiastic about the development of this platform.

“We wanted to partner with a company that could not only provide a platform that met our needs, but could also understand the transportation needs of our small towns and very rural areas,” Taylor said. We are really excited about this platform. »

Volunteer drivers and passengers will be able to manage their trips with applications. The one for drivers will give them detailed instructions for picking up and dropping off passengers, who will use another app to book their trips and see their

journey in real time.

Urban/Rural Rides’ mandate is to provide safe and affordable transportation to seniors, low-income families and people living with moderate disabilities, in order to reduce the impacts of aging and poverty.

Ms. Taylor emphasizes the importance of volunteer drivers. Volunteer drivers help people in their local community, while also being part of a provincial movement to help the most vulnerable in our communities access essential life needs like medical services,” explained Ms. Taylor.

Launched in batches, the deployment of the platform in the 12 regional service commissions of the province should be completed by the end of 2024.

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