



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

“To Protect and Serve”

Office of the Commissioner

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Older Driver Safety Awareness: Keeping Our Loved Ones Safe

U.S. Virgin Islands – The VI Police Department and the VI Office of Highway Safety urge the community to be proactive about safe driving skills by learning ways to identify changes early and intervening as soon as possible to help older drivers maintain safe mobility. Older Driver Safety Awareness Week (ODSAW), December 4 through December 8, is recognized nationally to bring light to this safety issue for a growing population over age 65.

For this demographic, mobility and independence are essential to staying engaged and active. However, as people age, their physical, visual, and cognitive functions can decline, making them more vulnerable to severe injury or even death when involved in a vehicle crash. The U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) offers information and guidance to help families and caretakers of older drivers have open and honest discussions with older loved ones to ensure their safety on the road for years to come.

NHTSA encourages family and caregivers to discuss a “transportation plan” with older drivers to identify alternative transportation options if necessary. Families and caregivers may suggest that older drivers have their vision and hearing checked regularly and ask health care providers to review medications for potential interactions. It’s also a good idea for older drivers to plan trips during the daytime when traffic is lighter and it’s easier to see. Most importantly, families and caregivers should show compassion for older drivers who may no longer be able to drive. This can be a difficult time for all involved. Understanding and empathizing can go a long way in easing the transition.

For free resources on keeping safe as drivers age and information about how families and caregivers can create a safe system for all road users whether driving, walking, or cycling, visit NHTSA at www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/older-drivers. For local support, contact the Virgin Islands Office of Highway Safety through Director O’Neal at daphne.oneal@vipd.vi.gov or Occupant Protection Planner/Coordinator Denise Gomes at denise.gomes@vipd.vi.gov. You may also contact the office via telephone at (340) 772-3025 or (340) 473-7383.

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