ICBC Senior Driving Presentation & Audience Q&A

Date: Tuesday, October 27, 2026

Location: Wilson Seniors / Mabbett Hall

Speakers: Host/Organizer, Tom (ICBC), Hosein (ICBC Driver Examiner)

Today's presentation covers driving as we get older. We have Tom, who will talk about the rules and ins-and-outs of driving, and Hosein, a driving examiner based at the Port Coquitlam office who conducts the Enhanced Road Assessment (ERA).

Driving Challenges & Modern Road Conditions

In Port Coquitlam and across the Tri-Cities, we have a lot of new construction and increased population density, which means more drivers on the road than ever before. As population grows, even a small percentage of problematic drivers turns into a larger total number, making driving more challenging overall.

Exceptionally bright headlights are a concern for many seniors.

Transport Canada Action: Transport Canada requested public input over the summer to review headlight standards.

Why Are Headlights Brighter? Beyond new vehicle technology, many drivers are replacing standard halogen bulbs in older vehicles with high-powered LED aftermarket bulbs that are up to 10 times brighter, making it look like they are constantly driving with high beams on.

Road Design & Distractions

Roundabouts: Roundabouts are designed as a major safety improvement. Unlike right-angle (T-bone) collisions at traditional intersections—where crash forces are transferred directly into the passenger cabin—collisions in roundabouts are usually indirect sideswipes. Roundabouts generally reduce injury-causing crashes by about 70% at treated locations.

Distractions: Seniors aren't typically playing video games on smartphones while driving, but distractions can still happen—such as noisy grandkids in the back seat or unbuckled passengers.

Changing Intersection Rules: You may notice more "No Right Turn on Red" signs popping up. These are installed at intersections where pedestrians have been hit by right-turning vehicles.

Self-Assessment & Self-Regulation

Driving requires rapid visual processing, quick decision-making, and physical mobility (such as comfortably turning to shoulder check).

Passenger Feedback: Pay attention to repeated feedback or "editorial comments" from passengers in your vehicle.

Vehicle Scuffs: Check the corners of your car. Scuffs or minor scratches around bumpers/mirrors can indicate declining spatial awareness during parking.

Self-Regulation: Most mature drivers naturally self-regulate by avoiding high-stress conditions (e.g., downtown Vancouver during Friday evening rush hour in the rain). Statistically, mature drivers are among the safest on the road and crash far less often than young drivers, though seniors remain more vulnerable to injury if a crash does occur.

Driver Fitness & The Enhanced Road Assessment (ERA)

Hosein works as a driver examiner out of the Port Coquitlam Driver Licensing Office. One of the roles is conducting the Enhanced Road Assessment (ERA).

Why Drivers Are Required to Complete Medicals or Assessments

1. Commercial Drivers: Required to submit periodic medical reports based on age and license class.

2. Specific Medical Conditions: Drivers with conditions such as Type 1 Diabetes are monitored through medical reports submitted by their physician to RoadSafetyBC.

3. Age 80 Medical Screening: When you turn 80 RoadSafetyBC initiates a driver medical review process. Based on your doctor's report, RoadSafetyBC may determine you are fit to drive, request more information, or refer you for an ERA.

Possible Outcomes of an ERA Evaluation Following an assessment, RoadSafetyBC reviews the examiner’s report and makes one of four determinations:

1. Unrestricted License: Cleared to continue driving as normal.

2. Conditional/Restricted License: Cleared to drive with specific conditions (e.g., daylight-only driving).

3. Further Testing: Requirement to complete an additional assessment or submit further medical data.

4. Driving Retirement: Recommendation to transition to alternative transportation options.

How to Prepare for Your ERA Assessment

Arrival & Identification: Arrive 15–20 minutes before your scheduled appointment. Bring two pieces of ID and your current vehicle insurance documents.

No Fee: The ERA is a free assessment provided by ICBC.

Vehicle Condition: Ensure your vehicle is fully roadworthy and safe. If warning lights (such as an active Airbag or Check Engine light) are illuminated, or if brake lights, horn, indicators, or windshield wipers are faulty, the assessment cannot proceed.

Bring a Supervisor/Accompanying Driver: It is strongly recommended to bring a fully licensed family member or friend to your appointment. If a candidate commits a serious traffic violation or dangerous action during the assessment, their driver's license may be cancelled immediately, meaning they cannot drive themselves home.

Assistive Devices: Bring any necessary prescription glasses/lenses, hearing aids, or physical mobility devices you use in daily life.

What Happens During the Assessment Procedure?

1. Pre-Trip & Physical/Cognitive Check:

The examiner will review vehicle controls and conduct a basic physical flexibility and reaction check (e.g., moving your foot between the gas and brake pedals on command).

2. On-Road Portion (Two ~20-minute segments):

Directions & Rule Compliance: Examiners will provide directional prompts (left/right turns). However, you are expected to follow posted road signs independently. For example, if you are in a right-turn-only lane, you must execute the turn without waiting for an explicit prompt.

Maneuvers: Complex parking maneuvers like parallel parking or emergency stopping are not part of the ERA. Assessments typically only require basic forward parking or backing into a stall.

Multitasking Controls: You may be asked to operate basic controls while driving (e.g., activation of turn signals, horn, or windshield wipers).

Multi-Step Directions: Examiners may give a 2-to-3 step directional instruction in advance to evaluate memory and planning.

Reversed Route/Landmark Exercise: The examiner may designate a local landmark, guide you through a brief series of turns, and ask you to navigate back to the designated landmark.

Practical Driving Tips & Refresher Rules

Speed Management: Watch for school zones (30 km/h from 8 AM to 5 PM on school days) and park zones. Remember to resume normal speeds (typically 50 km/h) promptly once exiting a restricted zone. Avoid driving excessively slow or over the speed limit.

Braking Technique: Use only your right foot for both gas and brake pedals. Avoid left-foot braking.

Left-Hand Turns: Turning left across oncoming traffic is one of the highest-risk maneuvers.

If you are already established in the intersection waiting to turn left, do not rush. Even if the signal turns red, you have the legal right to clear the intersection safely before cross-traffic proceeds.

Double-check for pedestrians in crosswalks before committing to the turn.

Exercise extra caution when estimating the speed of oncoming motorcycles or single-headlight vehicles.

Highway Merging: Match your speed to highway traffic flow while on the acceleration ramp before signaling and merging into the lane. Merging at significantly slower speeds creates a high risk of rear-end collisions.

Lane Discipline: When making a turn onto a multi-lane road, turn into the lane immediately closest to you. Avoid drifting or swinging wide into outer lanes.

Planning for Transportation Mobility

Eventually, everyone chooses or needs to retire from driving. Proactive mobility planning ensures a smooth transition:

BC Services / Photo ID: If you surrender your driver's license, ICBC provides a free BC Photo ID card for identification purposes.

Cost Comparison: The annual cost of vehicle ownership (insurance, fuel, maintenance, repairs) often totals several thousand dollars. Budgeting those funds toward public transit, volunteer driver programs, ride-hailing services (such as Uber or Lyft), or delivery services can be a cost-effective alternative.

Alternative Options: E-bikes, public transit, local senior shuttle networks, and delivery services for groceries and pharmacy needs make maintaining independence easier than ever.

Audience Q&A Session

Q: Once you reach age 80, how often do you have to get tested?

Around age 80 or 81, you will receive a notice to visit your family doctor for a medical examination. If your doctor clears you, no further testing is required at that time. After age 85, medical evaluations typically occur every two years. You are only referred to ICBC for an ERA if your doctor identifies specific health or cognitive concerns on your medical report.

Q: Do examiners look at your past driving record during an ERA?

No. The ERA evaluates your driving performance solely during that specific assessment session. Past traffic tickets or old accidents are not factored into the assessment evaluation.

Q: When turning left onto a road with multiple lanes, is it illegal to turn into the far lane?

Yes, you are legally required to turn into the lane closest to you. Turning wide into an outer lane is a common cause of minor traffic side-swipe incidents. Always shoulder-check and maintain lane discipline.

Q: How are drivers supposed to handle small neighborhood traffic circles vs. roundabouts?

Drivers inside a roundabout or traffic circle have the right of way; entering drivers must yield to traffic already in the circle. When exiting a roundabout, activate your right-turn signal to indicate your intention to leave the circle.

Q: Why do doctors charge fees to complete the driver medical forms?

Doctor fees for completing driver medical examination reports are not set or controlled by ICBC. They are determined by individual medical practices and provincial regulations. If you have concerns about these non-MSP-covered fees, it is recommended to discuss them with your physician or contact your local MLA.