



Insider

News and information to help Florida's aging road users



December 2020



Understand



Be Proactive



Plan



The Safe Mobility for Life Coalition celebrated Older Driver Safety Awareness Week, December 7–11, 2020. You can be proactive all year long and maintain your mobility independence by building a transportation plan that incorporates different modes of transportation. Plan ahead by learning your local bike routes, requesting a transportation network company, and exploring your neighborhood on foot. When you can get around with or without a vehicle, you can remain safe, mobile, and independent for life.

How do you get around your community? Floridians age 50 and older are invited to participate in a new survey at fdot.tips/survey2020.



Understand



Take Action to Maintain Safe Driving Skills

Are you spending a little less time behind the wheel lately? You're not alone. Since February, there have been fewer drivers on our roads. While a lot of us have pressed pause on driving, other things have continued full speed ahead:

- Less traffic has allowed roadway construction to continue and even move forward more quickly in some regions. Anticipate that there may be changes in routes that you were familiar with just a few months ago.
- Natural age-related changes, even small ones, could impact your driving when you do get back into the driver's seat. Common situations include difficulty gripping the steering wheel and turning to grab your seatbelt.
- Traffic crashes are still occurring in high numbers with an increase in speed-related incidents. It is important to be extra cautious and alert to those driving around you.



Take a virtual driver safety course.

If you are a Florida driver 55 years of age or older you are eligible to complete an approved driver safety course and could receive a cost reduction on your car insurance for three years. These classes are an opportunity to maintain your safe and defensive driving skills, understand your abilities and learn techniques to compensate for natural age-related changes.

To learn more about how these courses can help you maintain safe driving skills and how to register, visit fdot.tips/driversafety.



Participate in a CarFit Virtual Workshop.

CarFit is an educational safety program designed to help keep you safe and comfortable behind the wheel by improving the “fit” between you and your car. The new **CarFit Virtual Workshop** provides an in-depth look at several key aspects involved in getting a proper fit in your vehicle. Learn about what to look for when it comes to fit, the everyday household objects you can use to measure and adjust, and how this may keep you safer on the road.



Review the latest tip cards and roadway graphics.

It has been a long time since most of us have touched a driving manual. Laws, road signs, and signals have changed and will continue to change. Reviewing the [FLHSMV's Driver Handbook](#) is a great way to ensure you know all the rules of the road. For more ways to learn, the Safe Mobility for Life Coalition has created a [Roadway Safety Tip Card series](#). These include easy to understand visuals so that you know what to expect when coming across roundabouts, flashing yellow arrows, wrong-way driving signals and red lights. Access these tip cards at fdot.tips/resourcecenter.



Be Proactive

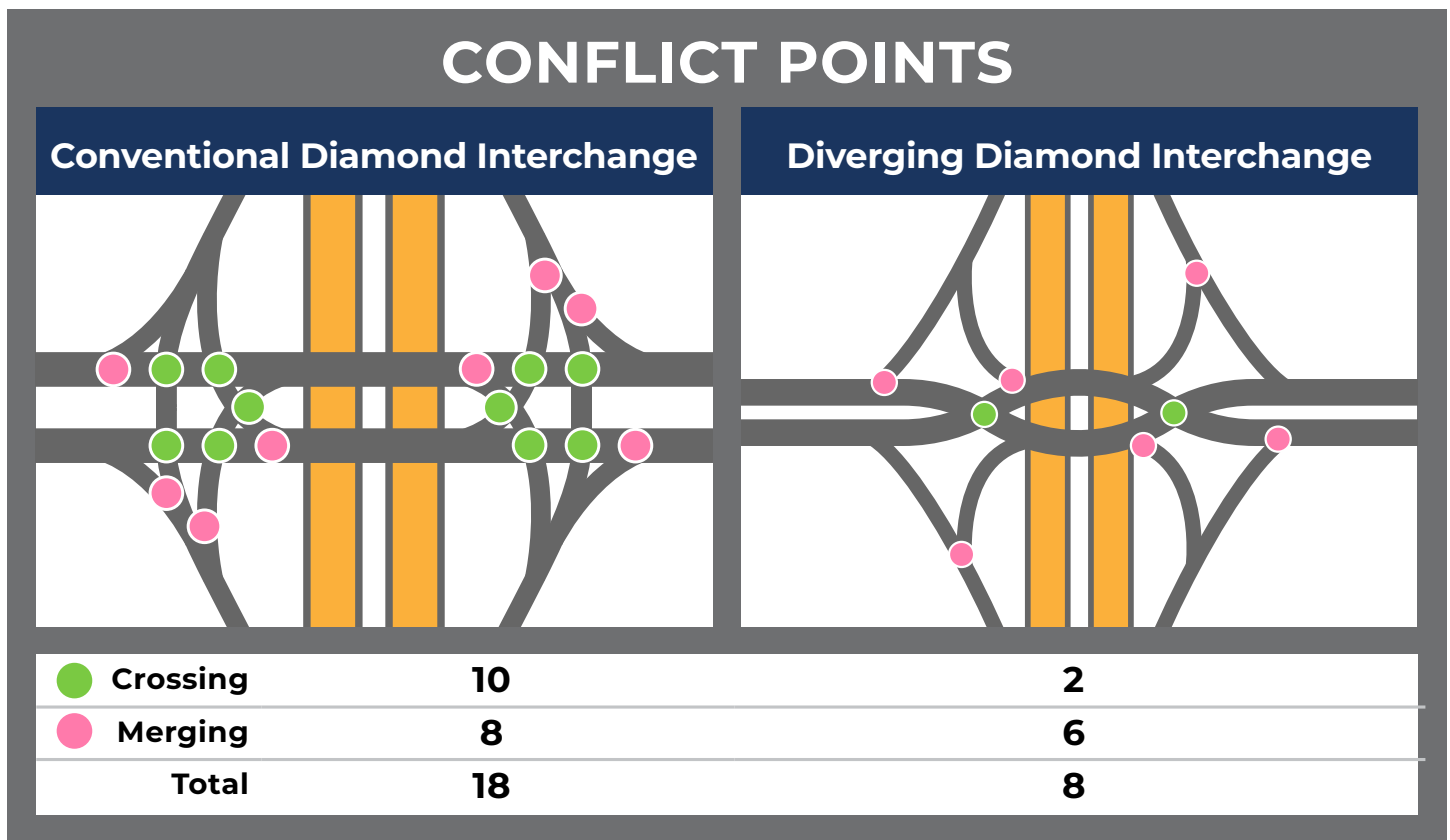


Diamonds are a Driver's Best Friend!

Diamonds are popping up across Florida – Diverging Diamond Interchanges (DDIs), that is. These diamonds may not sparkle but they do help our roadways shine by reducing travel times and improving safety. More DDIs are planned in the coming years, so now is the time to be proactive about learning how to drive through them.

DDIs improve safety and efficiency where freeways meet high-volume local roadways. Unlike a conventional diamond interchange, the lanes in a DDI cross over to the left side of the roadway. This limits the number of traffic signal phases and allows drivers to make left turns without crossing in front of oncoming traffic.

How does a DDI boost safety you ask? It is all in the reduced conflict points. A conventional interchange has 18 different points at which vehicles cross paths by either turning in front of oncoming traffic or by merging. DDIs have only 8 such points, meaning there are fewer chances for drivers to collide. DDIs also move traffic more efficiently by removing the left turn phase of the traffic signal. Compared to a conventional interchange, twice as many vehicles can travel through a DDI in the same amount of time.



While somewhat new to Florida, DDIs have been constructed in the U.S. for more than a decade and have a proven track record of safety and efficiency. Four DDIs are already in use in Florida: Interstate 75 at University Parkway in Sarasota, Interstate 95 at Viera Boulevard in Broward County, 27th Avenue at State Road 836 and 57th Avenue at State Road 836 in Miami. Two DDIs are under construction and eight more are planned.

Be proactive about your driving skills by visiting the Florida Department of Transportation’s online toolkit at [fdot.tips/DDI](https://www.floridadot.com/tips/DDI). It includes graphics and videos that show you step-by-step how to navigate DDIs so that you can drive with confidence.



Plan

Creating a Transportation Plan is Key to Mobility Independence



Think about the last time that you experienced a dead battery or a flat tire. Chances are that your car trouble delayed or canceled your plans. If our car is out of commission, or if driving is no longer an option, how will we get where we need to go? Knowing the answer to that question before it is needed is one key to remain safe and mobile for life.

What is mobility independence? It is the ability to get to the places that you need or want to go with or without a car. A lot of people relate driving with freedom. Scenarios like the one above remind us that having a car makes us car-dependent, not independent. Only having one option for transportation is why those who stop driving make fewer trips for health, shopping, and social activities. This reduces quality of life and impacts community connections.

Car trouble is not the only concern. Natural age-related changes vary from person to person and can happen at any time. If you build, practice, and adjust your plan now, you will be prepared if changes occur. As you practice, you can enjoy the health, social, financial, and environmental benefits of getting around without your car.

The Safe Mobility for Life Coalition encourages you to build a plan that incorporates other modes of transportation such as:

- Biking or walking if you live near stores, restaurants, friends or family.
- Riding the bus or train to places that are too far to walk or bike.
- Requesting a ride through a ridesourcing platform such as Uber or Lyft.

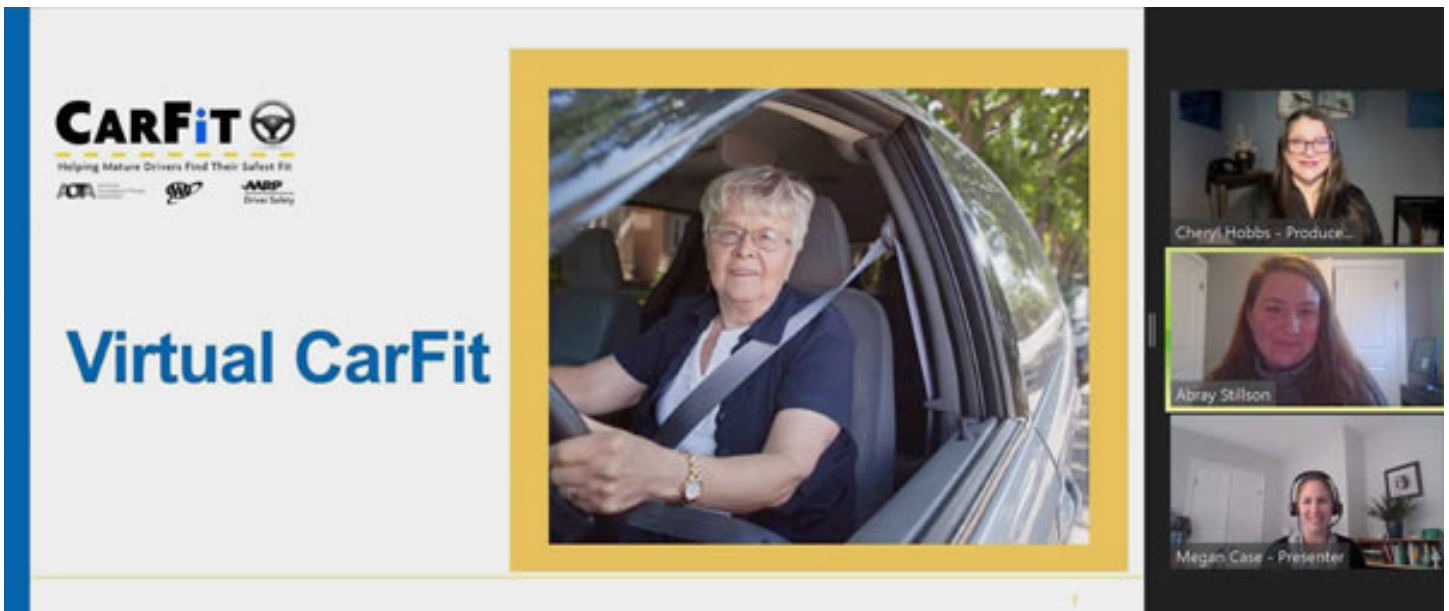
Choosing to be proactive about creating and implementing your plan means that you are prepared if the time comes when it is no longer safe or practical to drive. Visit [fdot.tips/guide](https://www.fdot.com/tips/guide) to access plan worksheets and resources to help you learn how to use these new modes safely.

Why it's important

Non-drivers make:



Source: Preserving the Mobility and Safety of Older Americans; TRIP; March 2018



Virtually Check Your “Fit” with CarFit

Making sure that you and your vehicle fit well together can be as important to your safety as a mechanical checkup. The new CarFit Virtual Workshop provides an in-depth look at several key aspects involved in getting a proper fit in your vehicle. Learn about what to look for when it comes to fit, the everyday household objects you can use to measure and make adjustments, and how this may keep you safer on the road.

During this **FREE**, 90-minute workshop you will learn:

- Actions you can take to improve your fit in your personal vehicle
- How getting the proper fit in your vehicle may increase your safety and the safety of others on the road
- When and how to connect with professionals and trained volunteers who can help you achieve a better fit

Still have questions after the virtual workshop? Join a Virtual Focus Session, a 30-minute small group discussion with CarFit volunteers designed to explore common challenges to making adjustments and finding a safe and comfortable fit in your car. This session is for individuals who have already attended a CarFit Virtual Workshop and still have specific questions or concerns regarding how to achieve a proper fit in their vehicle.

If you are ready to get started, register for a virtual CarFit event at bit.ly/carfitonline.



Safety Spotlight

2020 Holiday Travel Tips

If you will be traveling, take steps to protect yourselves and others with travel guidelines from the CDC. Driving can help you avoid crowded places such as airports and bus terminals. You should still aim to reduce your contact with others during your road trip. Aim for shorter stops along the way for gas, food, or bathroom breaks. These put you and your passengers in close contact with other people and frequently-touched surfaces.



Visit the CDC website to learn more about their travel safety guidelines and considerations for the holiday season.

Common vehicle-travel situations you can expect and prepare for:

In all public settings

- Wear a mask.
- Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from anyone who is not from your household.

Bathrooms and rest stops

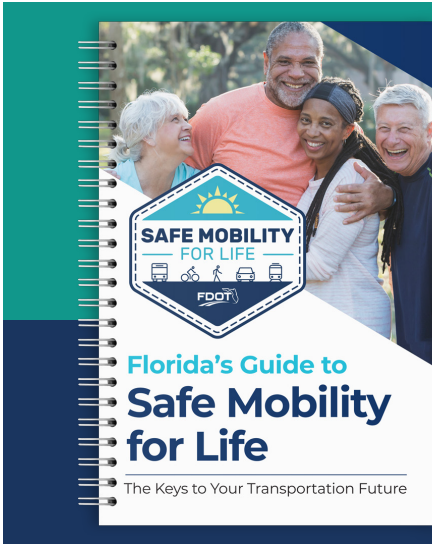
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after using the bathroom and after you have been in a public place.
- If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Getting Gas

- Use disinfecting wipes on handles and buttons at the gas pumps before you touch them (if available).
- After fueling, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. When you get to your destination, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Food Stops

- The safest option is to bring your own food.
- If you don't bring your own food, use drive-through, delivery, take-out, and curbside pick-up options to minimize exposure to others.



Everything you need to stay safe, mobile, and independent.

Download at fdot.tips/guide
Now available in Spanish!

To request outreach materials: Safe Mobility for Life Resource Center
Phone: 1-833-930-2952, Email: Contact@SafeMobilityFL.com

Do you know a group of older adults who would be interested in learning more about the Keys to Achieve Safe Mobility for Life? Email Contact@SafeMobilityFL.com to schedule a "The Keys to Achieve Safe Mobility for Life" workshop today.



[SafeMobilityFL.com](https://www.SafeMobilityFL.com)



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