



Insider

News and information to help Florida's aging road users



March 2021



Understand



Be Proactive



Plan

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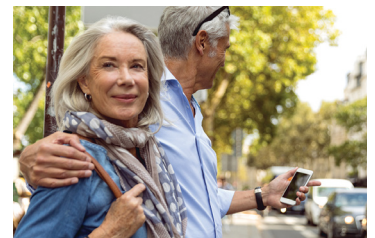
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Aging Population Drives Roadway Changes

A Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) pilot program conducted by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) 31 years ago kickstarted their now statewide Safe Mobility for Life Program. The purpose of the pilot was to identify highway safety improvements to enhance the safety and mobility of older drivers. With one of the highest populations of adults aged 65 and older, Florida was a great place to start.

As we age, many natural age-related changes may impact driving skills. Starting around age 55, there is generally a slow decrease in our ability to process information quickly, remember and judge driving events, and respond rapidly to other vehicles and road users that we encounter.



Natural Age-Related Changes

Vision



Impact on Driving

Declines in vision can impact your ability to read signs, see roadway markings, and navigate glare.

Cognition



Impact on Driving

Delayed reactions, trouble adjusting to traffic conditions, or slower responses to signals all point to a potential change or decline.

Physical Ability



Impact on Driving

Aging can lead to a loss in muscle or bone strength, and a potential loss in your ability to control your vehicle.

The roadway and pedestrian improvements installed by FDOT on state roads during the early years of the program were adopted by many local governments and are now common roadway features. These improvements address natural age-related changes by providing:

Increased visibility



- Pavement marking widths increased
- Spacing of reflective pavement markers reduced
- Larger lettering on guide signs based on the speed of the road

Pedestrian features at intersections



- Countdown pedestrian signals
- Refuge islands
- High-emphasis crosswalks
- Longer walk times

Advance notification



- Advance street name signs
- Advance warning signs (stop, yield, and signal ahead)

As Florida's aging population continued to increase, the Safe Mobility for Life Program evolved to help people maintain safety and mobility independence as they age, whether they are driving, walking, biking, or riding. In 2009, FDOT partnered with Florida State University's Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy to form a diverse statewide coalition. Today, the coalition consists of dedicated members from 29 organizations who work together to keep Floridians safe, mobile, and connected to their communities beyond the driver's seat.

To learn more about the Safe Mobility for Life Coalition's goals and focus areas, visit fdot.tips/coalition.

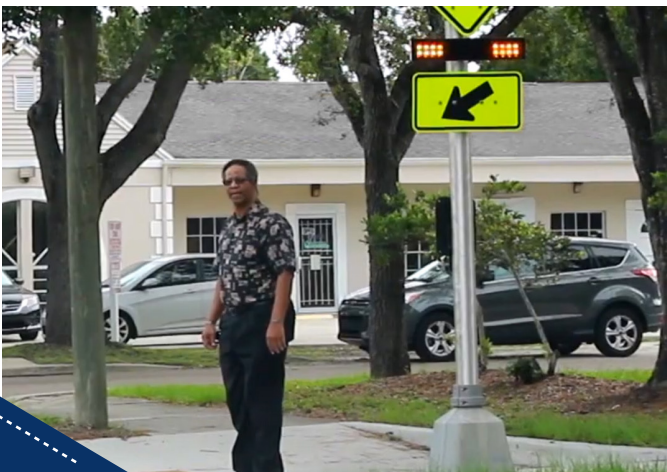


Your Guide to RRFBs

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) is a mouthful, but don't let the name fool you! An RRFB is nothing more than a set of flashing, rectangular lights that catch the eye of drivers.

Installed at midblock and unsignalized crossings, RRFBs are activated with the press of a button and will flash with a strobe-like flash pattern (think: emergency flashers on police vehicles) as a pedestrian crosses the street.

It is important to know what to do when you see an RRFB, whether you are walking, biking, or driving. Review each of the scenarios below and visit [fdot.tips/walking](https://www.flhwy.com/tips/walking) to learn more about pedestrian signs, signals, and markings.



Pedestrians: When you **see** an RRFB, **do** the following:

- **Step 1:** Push the call button to activate the warning lights.
- **Step 2:** Check that the lights are flashing.
- **Step 3:** Look left, right, and left again to make sure traffic is stopped before entering the crosswalk.
- **Step 4:** When crossing multiple lanes of traffic, stop in the center and make sure traffic is stopped before continuing to cross.



Drivers and Bicyclists: When you **see** an RRFB, **do** the following:

- **Step 1:** Slow down when you see the flashing lights.
- **Step 2:** Look ahead for pedestrians.
- **Step 3:** Stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk.
- **Step 4:** Wait until the pedestrian has safely crossed before proceeding.
- **Step 5:** Stop when a pedestrian is in the crosswalk even if the RRFB has not been activated.



Thinking Beyond the Driver's Seat with Lisa Bacot

Safe Mobility for Life Coalition Member Lisa Bacot likes to see people of all ages moving safely, whether they are walking, biking, driving, or riding public transportation.

As Executive Director of the Florida Public Transportation Association (**FPTA**), she works to support all modes of public transit, as well as advocating to make public transit safer, greener, more available, affordable, and accessible. Headquartered in Tallahassee, she deals with government officials, businesses, transit authorities, and private citizens.



“Educating people and helping public transit grow in Florida is our mission,” said Bacot. “Our message is you never know what’s going to happen, or when you might get sick or injured and need an option other than driving. Make sure you have a public transportation plan ready, so you don’t become isolated.”

When working with the Safe Mobility for Life Coalition, the FPTA often co-hosts Safe Transit for Life workshops. Bacot said she loves spreading the message of health, safety, and accessibility to older adults, especially those who can no longer safely drive and depend on public transit. During the workshops, Bacot and others show the group how easy it can be to use public transit. They also give tips on staying safe while biking and walking.*

“Many have recently given up driving and may not know how to use public transportation,” Bacot explained. “We take a small group on a short walk to a bus stop. Then we travel to visit a museum or restaurant and then return. They are surprised by how easy it can be.”



Bacot practices what she preaches. After her daughter graduated from high school, Bacot and her husband moved to downtown Tallahassee within walking distance of a bus stop, so she can bus, walk, or bike to meetings. Now she enjoys exploring her community beyond the driver’s seat and, for the sake of the environment and personal health, she hopes others will consider trying to do the same. They might find a new appreciation for the homes, stores, and people they never saw while driving past.

**Workshops are currently on hold due to COVID-19. We look forward to safely resuming these events in the future.*



Interested in a Keys to Achieve Safe Mobility for Life Virtual Workshop?
Submit an interest form at fdot.tips/virtualkeys.



New Safety Standards from Transportation Network Companies

Ridesharing, ridesourcing, app rides – these are all common terms to describe the work of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs). TNCs use smartphone applications to connect customers who need a ride with drivers who can take them there. If you are unable to drive a personal vehicle, a TNC is one transportation option that you can explore to get you where you need and want to go.

Chances are you have heard of the most well-known companies, Uber and Lyft. To protect you as a rider, both companies have adopted new health safety guidelines to include:

- Mandatory masks for riders and drivers
- Encouraging open-window rides when possible
- Requiring all riders to sit in the backseat
- Driver access to cleaning and sanitation supplies

You can find other TNCs in your area at [FindaRideFlorida.org](https://www.findarideflorida.org). You will be given each provider's contact information and can reach out to them directly with any questions about their policies or service hours.

Ready to learn more about using TNCs as a transportation option? The Safe Mobility for Life Coalition's **Transportation Network Companies: Tips for Using Transportation Options in Florida** brochure can help. Visit fdot.tips/resourcecenter to download or order your free copy today!

Everything You Need to Be Transit Ready

Florida’s public transit options continue to move people around their communities safely and efficiently. If you have access to public transit and need to explore new ways to get around, a little preparation can make a world of difference.

The Safe Mobility for Life Coalition offers **two resources** to help you get started:

- The **Public Transit: Tips on How to Use Transportation Options in Florida booklet** talks about the benefits of riding transit and includes safety tips along with contact information for each of Florida’s transit agencies.
- The new **Transit Ready Kit** lists everything needed to prepare for a safe and comfortable transit trip. A review of the full list is a great reminder of the different things you may need or want to have handy.



You can access the full **Transit Ready Kit** and the **Public Transit booklet** at fdot.tips/transit.

ARE YOU TRANSIT READY?



Items to bring on your transit ride



Pack your things



Know your stops



Protect yourself



Gather your necessities



Relax on board



Prepare for weather



Maintain your routine



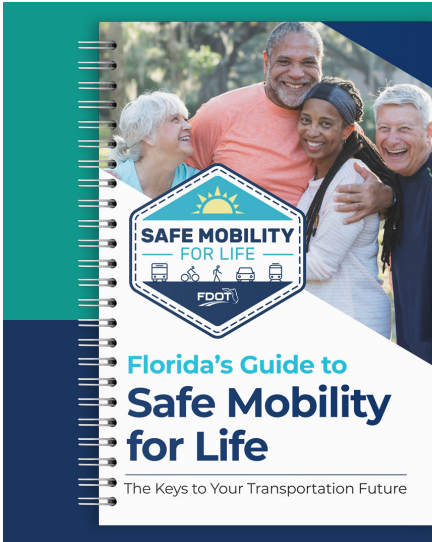
See and be seen



Prep your payment



View the full Transit Ready Kit and more public transit resources at fdot.tips/transit.



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)



Safe Mobility for Life Program
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