

Drivers over 85 years old are the fastest-growing segment of American automobile users. Their numbers doubled between 1998 and 2013, to 3.48 million drivers—the highest number ever on record—and the number is rising, according to the U.S. FHWA (Federal Highway Administration, a DOT agency). Drivers over 50 years old are increasing fast too, reaching 93.5 million in 2013. This age group now represents an estimated 44% of all drivers.



The number of older drivers will continue to be high, because middle-aged people will still be driving as they age. But young people are not becoming drivers at the rate their parents and grandparents did; some might not ever get licenses and thus won't be driving when they're elderly. The government statistics show that there are fewer 16-year-olds on the road now than at any time since the 1960s. An estimated 1.72 million young people in that age group were licensed drivers in 2009, compared with only 1.08 million in 2014, according to the FHWA. And an UMTRI (University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute) study finds only 24% of eligible 16-year-olds in the U.S. currently have a driving licence.