

Funeral discounts for Japan's elderly who quit driving

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There is a new road-safety strategy in central Japan to encourage elderly drivers to stop driving. A company that operates 89 funeral homes is offering a 15 per cent discount on funeral services to any driver over the age of 75 who surrenders their driving licence. The discount also applies to family members of those relinquishing their licence. The scheme has the full backing of the local police force. Drivers must visit a police station to hand in their licence. Police officers then provide a document, which the elderly person hands to the funeral home as proof that they are no longer allowed to drive. Similar schemes in Japan have included cut-price taxi fares, discounts on entry to public baths and cheaper noodles.

The latest initiative is a further attempt to reduce the number of traffic accidents involving seniors, which is becoming a serious problem in Japan. There are almost 5 million licence holders in Japan over the age of 75. This is double the number from a decade ago. In that same period, there has been an increase in the number of fatal collisions involving elderly drivers. Drivers aged 75 or older accounted for 13.2 per cent of fatal traffic accidents in central Japan's Aichi Prefecture last year. This is up from 7.7 per cent in 2007. Aichi police say some of those accidents involved seniors confusing the accelerator and brake pedals or mistakenly putting the vehicle into reverse.

Sources: bbc.com / mainichi.jp / japantimes.co.jp

Writing

There should be an age limit at which people must stop driving. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

road safety / strategy / funeral / discount / driving licence / police / taxi fares / noodles / initiative / traffic accidents / problem / double / a decade ago / accelerator/ reverse

True / False

- a) A company with 89 funeral homes is part of a road-safety campaign. T / F
- b) The company is offering a 15% discount to anyone who stops driving. T / F
- c) The local police force has big doubts about the strategy. T / F
- d) Old people in Japan have been offered cheaper noodles to stop driving. T / F
- e) Over 5 million people with driving licences in Japan are over 75 years old. T / F
- f) The number of elderly drivers in Japan has hardly changed in a decade. T / F
- g) There has been an increase in fatal collisions involving elderly people. T / F
- h) Police said some elderly people mistake the accelerator for the brake. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. strategy | a. gives up |
| 2. encourage | b. inadvertently |
| 3. surrenders | c. plan |
| 4. backing | d. additional |
| 5. proof | e. deadly |
| 6. further | f. support |
| 7. double | g. crashes |
| 8. fatal | h. urge |
| 9. collisions | i. twice |
| 10. mistakenly | j. evidence |

Discussion – Student A

- a) How safe are the roads in your country?
- b) Who are the most dangerous drivers in your country?
- c) In what ways are elderly drivers safer?
- d) Do you think this is a good offer?
- e) Why do you think family members also get the discount?
- f) How successful do you think this strategy will be?
- g) What would you do to make roads safer?
- h) Should there be an age at which people should stop driving?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. a new road- | a. 15 per cent discount |
| 2. offering a | b. from a decade ago |
| 3. The scheme has the full backing | c. price taxi fares |
| 4. proof that they are no | d. and brake pedals |
| 5. cut- | e. into reverse |
| 6. The latest initiative is a further | f. safety strategy |
| 7. This is double the number | g. collisions involving elderly drivers |
| 8. an increase in the number of fatal | h. attempt to reduce the number |
| 9. seniors confusing the accelerator | i. longer allowed to drive |
| 10. mistakenly putting the vehicle | j. of the local police force |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What are the risks of driving at an older age?
- Should seniors have stickers on their cars to warn other drivers?
- Should senior drivers pay more in insurance?
- What kind of driver are you?
- What other incentives could be given to senior drivers?
- How would an elderly person's life change if they could no longer drive?
- What questions would you like to ask an elderly driver?

Spelling

- a new road-safety eartygst
- oareguen elderly divers to stop
- uessdrnrer their driving licence
- The hecmse has the full backing of the local police
- provide a mctouedn
- orfpo they that are no longer allowed
- The latest intitaevii
- accidents nlogvniiv seniors
- the number of fatal inolsisocl
- cuoctedna for 13.2 per cent
- confusing the lcrecreaato and brake pedals
- putting the cheiely into reverse

Answers – Synonym Match

1. c	2. h	3. a	4. f	5. j
6. d	7. i	8. e	9. g	10. b

Role Play

Role A – Reducing Speed Limits

You think reducing speed limits is the best way to reduce traffic accidents. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): more police patrols, dashboard cameras or re-testing of drivers.

Role B – More Police Patrols

You think more police patrols is the best way to reduce traffic accidents. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): reducing speed limits, dashboard cameras or re-testing of drivers.

Role C – Dashboard Cameras

You think dashboard cameras is the best way to reduce traffic accidents. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): more police patrols, reducing speed limits or re-testing of drivers.

Role D – Regular Driver Re-testing

You think regular re-testing of drivers is the best way to reduce traffic accidents. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): more police patrols, dashboard cameras or reducing speed limits.

Speaking – Traffic accidents

Rank these with your partner. Put the best ways to avoid traffic accidents at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| • dashboard cameras | • reduced speed limits |
| • more CCTV | • huge speeding fines |
| • speed radar everywhere | • road bumps |
| • regular driver re-testing | • more police patrols |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.