

## CarFit Program Offered to Seniors

The Essex County Sheriff's Department, in conjunction with several local police and fire departments, is proud to offer the CarFit Program to Essex County senior citizens. CarFit focuses on helping seniors adjust certain aspects of their vehicles so that they are more comfortable and safer drivers. As we get older, our bodies change. That rear view mirror may no longer be at the correct angle. The adjustment of those side view mirrors may result in a blind spot. Or the shoulder strap on the seat belt may need to be lowered a bit. CarFit-certified technicians can address these and other issues related to safe driving for seniors. The program's slogan states the mission perfectly: *"Helping Mature Drivers Find Their Perfect Fit."*

Sheriff Frank G. Cousins, Jr. spoke highly of the program, saying, "This is a wonderful way for a senior driver to speak to a trained individual about the proper fit of his or her vehicle. We encourage seniors to contact us or attend a CarFit event."

The CarFit program was created by the American Society on Aging and developed with AARP, AAA and AOTA, Inc. (The American Occupational Therapy Association). According to CarFit's fact sheet, the program has three goals: to help seniors improve the fit of their vehicles; promote conversations about safe driving and mobility options; and offer resources to help ensure safe driving among seniors.

What takes place at a typical CarFit appointment?

- This 20-minute process begins with the senior driving his or her vehicle to the appointment and completing some simple paperwork.
- The trained technician will review and help adjust:
  - Side and rear view mirrors
  - Safety belt
  - Head restraint
  - Steering wheel
  - Controls (including turn signals, emergency flashers, parking brake, horn and headlights)
- The technician will also discuss proper brake and gas pedal adjustment, as well as blind spots.



The CarFit program is free to seniors. If you are a member of a non-profit organization and would like to host a CarFit event, please call one of the certified CarFit technicians of the Essex County Sheriff's Department: Mr. John Russell at (978) 979-5233 or Assistant Superintendent Maurice Pratt at (978) 750-1900, ext. 3543.