

# Safety Tips

## TEEN DRIVERS

In the last decade, over 68,000 teens have died in car crashes.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for American teenagers.

Car crashes are the #1 cause of death for 16-year olds.

Taking on the role of driving coach and sharing years of experience may save your child's life.

Teens are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as other drivers.

65 percent of all teen passenger deaths occur when another teen is driving.

At 35 mph, a 2-second lapse in attention means you've traveled 100 feet without looking!

Teens are much more likely to be distracted when traveling with other teens.

Teens have the lowest seat belt use rate of all drivers.

This rate becomes worse when there are other teens in the car.

Perception is about one second and time to react is about three-fourths of a second in ideal conditions.

During the first year of licensed driving, 1-in-5 male and about 1-in-10 female 16-year old drivers will have a crash.

Males are more than twice as likely to have serious crashes as females. But while the crash total for males has been declining over the past 20 years, the total for females has been rising.

Only 32 states require a learner's permit before obtaining a driver's license. Only 15 of those 32 require the permits to be held for a minimum length of time.

Don't forget: As the parent, you are the boss! Driving is a privilege-especially for teens. The parent giveth and the parent taketh away.

### Tip #1: Make It Old and Bold

- Old, Large and Solid
- Think classic station wagon
- Check vehicle's history



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- Make sure it is safe to drive

### Tip #2: Less is More – The Potential Catastrophe of Passengers

- Other teens in the car with your teen driver adds to the risk.
- Friends lead to excitement, distraction and peer pressure
- Fatal crashes with teens are more likely to involve passengers.
- Teens are less likely to wear seat belts when driving with other teens.
- Teens plus teens in a car equals disaster. Just say "No" to passengers for the first year of driving.

### Tip #3: Keep Your Hands on the Wheel to Avoid Distractions.

- Keep both hands on the wheel while driving.
- Don't talk on the cell phone without a hands-free accessory.
- Wait 'til the next stoplight to change that CD.
- Don't drive with passengers until you are more experienced.

### Tip #4: Kissing the Windshield: Why Teens Don't Buckle Up

Most teens grew up riding in car seats, but today they aren't buckling up. So what gets young drivers and passengers to buckle up?

- Linking belt use to graduate driving privileges.
- Making your teen pay any fines that they incur.
- Teaching by example – always wear your seat belt
- Exercising your parental authority.
- Tell your kids to buckle up or walk. No Negotiations. When they have kids they'll understand.

### Tip #5: Defensive Driving for Teens

The first year of driving is a high-risk period, especially for beginners starting at age 16. Inexperience, nervousness and lack of practical skills can lead to bad decisions behind the wheel. Create a home graduated license program with your licensed teen.

- Continue to ride along and coach your teen.
- Set a driving curfew (morning & night).
- Monitor and limit driving during inclement weather.
- Restrict the number of passengers when your teen is driving.
- Talk to your teen – find out what techniques he/she has trouble with.
- Take your teen to a parking lot with low or no traffic and have them practice the tech-

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niques.

Parents, teach your teen to drive defensively. Anticipate conditions and situations that increase risk. Watch for poor driving habits like not signaling, sloppy turns, speeding, lack of alertness or overcorrecting.

### Tip #6: Boys vs. Girls

More and more female drivers are taking to the road as aggressively as males and paying the price for their risky behavior. Parents must teach both sons and daughters.

This is not a competition either of them wants to win.

### Tip #7: Learner's Permit required

States with the most lenient licensing procedures have the highest crash rates for teens. Whether your state has a strict licensing procedure or not, you should always:

- Set your own waiting period for your teen.
- Pursue a driving instruction program.
- Log plenty of practice time with your teen before letting your teen take the exam.

### Tip #8: Parent-Teen Driving Agreement

To help your teen understand, take the time to review issues and responsibilities associated with driving. Consider making a Parent-Teen Driving Agreement, using the outline below as a guide.

#### Issue – Curfew

- Responsibilities/Rules – Weekday evening curfew 10 pm and a weekend evening curfew of midnight
- Agreement – Coming home after the curfew will result in the curfew being set one hour earlier for the next week, or the driving privileges being taken away.

#### Issue – Drinking alcohol and Driving

- Zero Tolerance
- Loss of driving privileges

### Tip #9: We all need our space. The 3 second Rule

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Allowing enough space between you and other cars on the road allows for time to react in case of an emergency.

- As the car in front of you passes a fixed point like a sign, tree or building, count "one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three". If you reach the designated point before three, slow down.
- Increase your distance by one for each bad driving condition. For rain and fog you would add two seconds.
- Make sure you drive in the middle of the lane to allow space on the side of the car.
- If the driver behind you is too close, change lanes and let them pass.

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