

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Teen Killed in One-car Crash

A 17-year-old boy was killed in a single-vehicle crash that occurred when he overcorrected as his car left the road. The car hit a power pole and rolled several times; the teen was ejected from the vehicle.

Source: *CFNews13.com* ♦

Lessons Learned

Teens often panic in emergency situations because they have neither the training nor the experience to execute the correct maneuver quickly enough to avoid a crash. They may take no action at all, take too long to react, or overcorrect, which could even make the situation worse.

In a driving emergency, a driver can stop or accelerate, with or without an accompanying turn. Most drivers who act out of panic will simply stop. They may skid to a stop, stop without considering the type of brakes on the vehicle (standard or anti-lock), or slam on the

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brakes when a more controlled stop is possible. If they try to turn, it is likely to be an uncontrolled turn and is often an overcorrection given the situation. For example, when the right wheels are off the pavement, a panicked driver will quickly yank the steering wheel to the left without slowing down, which could cause a rollover in some vehicles.

Most new vehicles have ABS (Anti-lock Braking System), which allows drivers to stop without skidding. In general, if you need to stop quickly with ABS, press on the brake pedal as hard as you can and keep pressing on it. You might feel the brake pedal pushing back when the ABS is working. Do not let up on the brake pedal. The ABS system will only work with the brake pedal pushed down.

Without ABS, you can cause the vehicle to go into a skid if you brake too hard. Apply the brakes as hard as you can without locking them. If the brakes lock up, you will feel the vehicle start to skid. Quickly let up on the brake pedal. As soon as the vehicle stops skidding, push down on the brake pedal again. Keep doing this until the vehicle has stopped.

In most cases, you can turn the vehicle quicker than you can stop it. You should consider turning in order to avoid a collision. Make sure you have a good grip with both hands on the steering wheel. Once you have turned away or changed lanes, you must be ready to keep the vehicle under control. Some drivers steer away from one collision only to end up in another. Always steer in the direction you want the vehicle to go. One aspect of having ABS is that you can turn your vehicle while braking without skidding. This is very helpful if you must turn or stop or slow down.

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Unbelted Teen Dies in Rollover Crash

A 14-year-old boy died in a rollover crash in a vehicle being driven by his 16-year-old brother, who was injured in the crash. Both teens were ejected from the vehicle when it rolled over after leaving the road; neither was wearing a seat belt.

Source: [IdahoPress.com](#) ♦

Lessons Learned

Most parents live in dread of the day their teens get driver's licenses and get behind the wheel on their own. Their concerns are well-founded, since teen drivers have the highest death rates in car crashes of any age group. Motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of death among Americans aged 15-20. But parents can help their teens be safer drivers even after they are licensed, particularly by paying attention to common risk factors.

First, you'll need to set the right example for your children by wearing your safety belt. "Do as I stay, not as I do," doesn't work with teens, particularly when they're out of your sight and you can't personally enforce the rule.

Also, make sure you never pull out of your driveway or a parking space until everyone in the vehicle is wearing a seat belt. Many high school students fail to use their safety belts even when riding with adults who are buckled up. An observational survey conducted at 12 high schools found that 46 percent of high school students were not wearing their safety belts when riding with adult drivers. About half of the unbelted students were riding with adults who were belted. If your teens are used to wearing safety belts as passengers, they'll be comfortable wearing them as drivers.

Next, educate your teen about the benefits of wearing safety belts. Here's some supportive information:

- Research has found that lap/shoulder safety belts, when used, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50 percent. For light truck occupants, safety belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 60 percent and moderate-to-critical injury by 65 percent.
- Ejection from the vehicle is one of the most injurious events that can happen to a person in a crash. In fatal crashes in 2005, 75% of passenger car occupants who were totally

ejected from the vehicle were killed. Safety belts are effective in preventing total ejections. Only 1% of the occupants reported to have been using restraints were totally ejected, compared with 30% of the unrestrained occupants.

- Safety belts should always be worn, even when riding in vehicles equipped with air bags. Air bags are designed to work with safety belts, not alone. Air bags, when not used with safety belts, have a fatality-reducing effectiveness rate of only 12 percent.

Third, educate your teen about the safety belt laws in your state. Be sure to review the graduated licensing laws - safety belt enforcement may differ from that of fully licensed drivers. For further reinforcement, get [professional guidance](#).

Enforcing GDL laws as house rules is an excellent tool for parents, who have the support of an existing law, the need for which and the efficacy of which is fully supported by research. Enforcement of the law by the police, while somewhat irregular in some states, is a very real possibility and could result in legal consequences for the teen. This gives parents additional support from an outside source when enforcing the law in their own households.

The law is typically detailed in the first or second chapter of the driver handbook. Many states post their driver handbooks online. You can also find information on GDL laws at your state's Department of Motor Vehicles or Department of Public Safety website. Once you locate the information, save or bookmark the information for future reference. GDL laws change as teens mature and gain experience.

Ready to get your Learners Permit?



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One Teen Killed, Four Injured in Collision

A teenage boy was killed and four other teens were injured after one of the teens ran a stop sign. The teens' vehicle rolled after it was struck by another car; the teen who died was ejected from the vehicle.

Source: *Chron.com*◆

Lessons Learned

Facts about stop signs and intersections:

- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that approximately 40-45 percent of all crashes occur at intersections or are intersection-related.
- Speeding, tailgating, running red lights, running stop signs, unsafe maneuvers, riding on the shoulder, and a general disregard of public or personal safety are all signs of aggressive driving.
- It is important to watch the roadway itself while you are driving. Identify intersections early.
- Every vehicle must yield the right-of-way at intersections that are controlled by stop signs, yield signs and traffic signals or as directed by a police officer.
- When you approach an intersection in which the traffic lights are inoperative, you should stop as if the intersection is controlled by a stop sign.
- Watch for and yield to pedestrians at all intersections.
- Some of the more dangerous railroad crossings may have a stop sign. If this is the case, the same laws apply as at a highway intersection.
- At an intersection with a stop sign, the driver of the vehicle must stop at the clearly marked stop line, but if none, before entering the crosswalk on the near side of the intersection.

How to Use a Teen Driving Contract

Teaching your teen to drive safely is one of your most important responsibilities as a parent, and training shouldn't end when your teen gets a driver's license.

The early years of driving are a dangerous time for teens. Almost 40% of all deaths for 16- to 19-year-olds occur in motor vehicle crashes; drivers in this age group are four times more likely to be involved in a crash than older drivers.

Setting and enforcing limits on your teen's driving privileges will help keep your teen safe while reinforcing that driving is a serious matter. Be sure to set limits that comply with your state's Graduated Driver's Licensing laws. A [Parent-Teen Driving Contract](#) can help you ensure that your teen knows the rules in your household for getting and maintaining driving privileges and the penalties for breaking those rules.

Here are some tips on how to use the contract:

- Completing a Parent-Teen Driving Contract will be most effective if the concept and expectation are presented in advance (preferably at age 14).
- Make sure your teen understands that she or he will not be allowed to drive until an agreement is reached and both parties have signed the contract and initialed each term presented in it. Start a dialogue early about what the terms might include.
- Set aside at least thirty minutes to review the contract together before you and your teen sign it.
- Post the contract in a conspicuous place in your home so you and your teen can review it frequently.

Before you begin teaching your teen to drive, consider your own driving habits and make a commitment to correct any careless or reckless behavior and model good defensive driving practices consistently.



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Prepping for a Safe Prom: Talking to Teens

Prom season is fast approaching and many parents are busy helping their teens buy dresses or rent tuxedos, select corsages and boutonnieres, and choose formal hairstyles. But prom preparation should also include frequent, specific, and frank discussions with teens about how to stay safe and avoid alcohol on prom night. Here are some tips on what to discuss:

- First, talk to other parents; then, talk to your teen about their friends' parents. Being part of your social group is no guarantee that other parents espouse a zero-tolerance policy for alcohol. You might be surprised to discover that other parents plan to provide their teens and their friends with alcohol in a "safe" manner and location. Though this is illegal in every state, it is a relatively common occurrence.
- If any of your teen's friends' parents plan to provide alcohol or "look the other way," reinforce your own house rules about alcohol with your teen. Make sure they understand that underage drinking is never acceptable, no matter what any other parent says or does, even for a special occasion.
- Make sure your teen will be riding with friends whose parents do not permit the use of alcohol.
- Try to organize an after-prom party for your teen with other teens' parents who have a zero-tolerance policy for alcohol and are willing to help chaperone.
- Next, create a code. Your teen must be able to signal for help without risking the ridicule of friends. Your teen might say or text, "Dinner was great!" as a code for "Please come get me." When you arrive to pick up your teen, she or he can blame you for having to leave or you can give the excuse of a "family emergency."
- Make an agreement with your teen that if you do have to pick the teen up, a discussion about the reason can be tabled until the next morning, when you and your teen are both calm and safe. Otherwise, teens may avoid calling parents for help because they don't want their parents to

know about the circumstances that required the ride home.

- If you haven't started texting with your teen, this is a good time to practice. Texting is an easy, unobtrusive way for your teen to check in with you frequently throughout the evening.
- Make a record of your teen's planned itinerary for the evening, and require your teen to inform you of any changes.
- Be alert to spontaneous changes in plans on the night of the prom; your teen won't have as much control over the situation if it takes place in an unfamiliar location and/or with people she or he doesn't know well. In the excitement of the evening, your teen might not anticipate difficulties and could end up in a risky situation before she or he realizes what is happening.
- Remember that the use of alcohol by teens increases the risk of activities that may result in serious long-term consequences, including:
 - Use of other drugs (alcohol is a gateway drug because its use compromises judgment and reduces inhibitions)
 - Driving under the influence
 - Alcohol poisoning from binge drinking (teens often binge drink to relax and may participate in drinking games that result in ingestion of large quantities of alcohol in a short period of time)
 - Increased sexual activity and multiple sexual partners due to lowered inhibitions, which increases the risk of pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted diseases
 - Exacerbation of underlying, perhaps undiagnosed, mental illness
 - Violence and rape (whether the victim is under the influence or not)
 - Suicide

Keep in mind that teenagers are not physically, mentally or emotionally ready to be under the influence. Even one alcoholic drink is too much for their developing bodies and brains. Teenagers are emotionally immature. They are still learning about themselves, relationships, and what direction they should take in life. Because even a small amount of alcohol reduces inhibitions and impairs judgment, they may react emotionally while under the influence without considering the consequences of their behavior.

Source: SafeDriver.com ♦

