

**DRIVERS 15 TO 20 YEARS OLD
HAVE THE HIGHEST INVOLVEMENT
RATE PER LICENSED DRIVER IN
FATAL AND ALL POLICE-REPORTED
CRASHES COMPARED TO ANY
OTHER AGE GROUP.**

It's not just good parenting, it's a matter of life and death. Parents need to start talking to their kids about traffic safety early and often – before they reach driving age. When teens do begin driving, the U.S. Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recommends that parents set rules and define and enforce the consequences if the rules are broken. Driving is a privilege and to keep that privilege, teens must follow the rules.

Getting through to teens isn't always easy, but research shows that teens do listen to their parents and that they can influence safe driving habits. Parents should lead by example and practice safe driving behaviors whenever their children are in the vehicle.

Below are the main issues that NHTSA believes should be addressed once teens start driving. It's important to talk about why these rules need to be set and to discuss the consequences. Have your teens sign the contract provided to make sure all the rules are followed and they stay safe on the road.

**REMINDE YOUR TEEN THAT
DRIVING IS A PRIVILEGE THAT
CAN EASILY BE REVOKED.**



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DRIVE RESPONSIBLY

DRIVE BY THE RULES, KEEP THE PRIVILEGE.

DISTRACTED DRIVING

Young drivers under the age of 20 are especially at risk of distracted driving. Their lack of driving experience can lead to critical misjudgments when they are distracted. Not surprisingly, they text more than any other age group and the numbers continue to increase. Parents should talk about the risks associated with texting or talking on the phone while driving and make their expectations clear.

RULE 1: PUT IT DOWN!

ALCOHOL

All States and the District of Columbia have 21-year-old minimum drinking age laws. In 2008, 31% of the young drivers (15 to 20 years old) who were killed in crashes had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .01 grams per deciliter (g/dL) or higher; 25% had a BAC of .08 or higher. The statistics prove it; alcohol and driving don't mix but it's especially important for less experienced drivers to never get behind the wheel after drinking. Make it clear to your teenage drivers that drinking and driving will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

RULE 2: ABSOLUTELY NO ALCOHOL!

SEAT BELTS

In 2008, of the 15-to 20-year-old passenger vehicle occupants killed in all fatal crashes, 60% (of those whose restraint use was known) were unrestrained.

RULE 3: ALWAYS BUCKLE UP!

NIGHTTIME DRIVING

More teens are in fatal crashes during nighttime hours than during the day. Almost 70% of occupant fatalities in the 16 to 20 (68%) age range were unrestrained during nighttime.

RULE 4: HAVE THE CAR IN THE DRIVEWAY BY THE DESIGNATED TIME!

PASSENGERS

Most teens are susceptible to peer pressure, which often leads to risky behavior. In a survey completed by the Allstate Foundation, 47% of the teens polled said they are sometimes distracted by passengers and nearly as many said they drive more safely without friends in the car. Research shows that the risk of a fatal crash increases in proportion to the number of teenage passengers.

RULE 5: NO MORE THAN ONE PASSENGER IN THE CAR AT ALL TIMES (OR ZERO PASSENGERS IF THE STATE'S GDL LAW DOESN'T PERMIT ANY).

GRADUATED DRIVERS LICENSE (GDL)

Immaturity and inexperience are some of the primary contributors to fatal crashes by teen drivers. GDL laws address these factors by reducing high-risk exposure for novice drivers. Studies clearly show the benefits of GDL laws with 20% to 50% reductions in crashes of young novice drivers. (NHTSA July 2008 Teen Driver Crash Report to Congress)

RULE 6: FOLLOW YOUR STATE'S GDL LAWS!

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parents need to set "house rules" for their teen drivers and define consequences that will be enforced. This can be done with a parent/teen contract or by having a continuing conversation about your expectations and consequences. Don't worry if your "house rules" exceed what state laws provide. You're not being strict, you could be saving your children's lives.

RULE 7: FOLLOW THE HOUSE RULES OR FACE THE CONSEQUENCES!