

START SMART...

The keys to safe teen driving



16 Going the Distance: REDUCE YOUR TEEN'S RISKS

Teen drivers have the highest crash risk of any age group. Per mile traveled, they have the highest involvement rates in crashes, from crashes involving property damage only to those that are fatal. The problem is worst among 16-year-olds, who have the most limited driving experience and an immaturity that often results in risk-taking behind the wheel.

So what are some of the top risks for teens?

Top Ten Risks

- **Inexperience:** Teens are more likely than older drivers to underestimate hazardous situations or dangerous situations or not be able to recognize hazardous situations.
- **Passengers:** Fatal crashes among teens are more likely to occur when other teenagers are in the car. The risk increases with every additional passenger.
- **Night driving:** This is a high-risk activity for beginners. Per mile driven, the crash rate for teenagers driving at night with passengers is 4 to 5 times higher than teenagers who drive alone during the day.
- **Distractions:** Anything that distracts the driver from the task of driving increases risk. Distractions include passengers, music, eating or drinking, and cell phone use.

- **Low seat belt use:** Teenagers generally are less likely to use safety belts than adults. In 2003, 57 percent of 16- to 20-year-old passenger vehicle occupants killed in crashes were not wearing safety belts.
- **Speed management:** Research shows that teens tend to fail to choose an appropriate speed for the driving conditions.
- **Poor visual search habits:** Teens have difficulty knowing when and where to look to identify the routine conflicts found in everyday driving.
- **Space management:** Teen drivers have difficulty judging how much time and space is needed to maneuver safely.
- **Single-vehicle crashes:** More 16-year-olds' fatal crashes involve only the teen's vehicle. Typically these are high-speed crashes in which the driver lost control.
- **Alcohol:** Impairs judgment, perception and slows reflexes – three critical factors required for safe driving.

Reduce your teen's risks by implementing the AAA StartSmart Parent-Teen Driving Agreement.



DID YOU KNOW?

- ✓ Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for teens. In fact, motor vehicle crashes kill more people between the ages of 15 and 20 than any other cause.
- ✓ According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 43,443 people died in motor vehicle crashes in 2005 and 5,288 were teenagers. Based on miles driven, teenagers are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers.
- ✓ A recent analysis of ten years of crash data by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety reports that the majority of people killed in teen driver crashes are people *other* than the teen drivers themselves.

