



Teen Driver Safety: Tips for Parents and Guardians

3 Quick Facts

- 1** Car crashes are a leading cause of death for teens ages 15-19 years.
- 2** Teens whose parents who set rules and monitor their driving in a helpful, supportive way, are half as likely to be in a crash and 71 percent less likely to drive impaired.
- 3** Every state has adopted some form of graduated driver licensing, which eases teens into the responsibilities of driving through a series of steps prior to a full unrestricted driver's license.

Isn't my teen's driver's education class enough to teach safe driving?

No. While every state has graduated driver licensing laws, not every state requires teens to take driver's education classes before getting a license. When they do take classes, there are different standards for the number of hours of in-class and behind-the-wheel instruction. Data suggest that teens get less behind-the-wheel instruction than experts recommend. If parents and guardians do not make up for the gap in training, their teens may be unprepared for a variety of conditions that drivers face and be at greater risk of a crash.

What steps can parents take to teach their teens safe driving skills?



Always follow traffic and safety laws. Use a seat belt, drive the speed limit, do not drive while drowsy, impaired, or distracted.



Learn your state's laws on teen driving. Graduated driver licensing laws require practice for a designated number of hours and in different driving conditions. The laws also limit driving at night, how many people may be in a teen's car, and use of cell phones.



Practice with your teen in difficult situations, like driving in heavy traffic, different weather patterns, and at night. Stay calm and patient, give helpful feedback, and praise good decisions.



A driving contract sets clear rules and consequences if rules are broken. Make sure the contract requires seat belt use for each person in the car at all times, no cell phones, and checking in with parents.



Remember that age alone is not a sign your teen is ready to drive. If they take too many risks or does not pay attention to details, they may not be ready to drive.



Ask your teen's doctor if their medication might affect how they drive.

