



# Teen Driving Safety: Graduated Driver Licensing saves lives

As teens go back to school this fall, they may experience the most dangerous time in their life – the moment they get behind the wheel. Many teens will transition from the safest mode of transportation – school buses, to the most dangerous – driving themselves. The back-to-school season is a great time to learn about Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) and what practices will work best for your family.

## What is GDL?

Graduated Driver Licensing allows teens to practice driving skills in low risk situations, moving through driver license stages with gradually increasing responsibility. Car crashes kill more teens than homicide, suicide and disease combined, mostly due to inexperience and distractions.

**Traffic crashes are the No. 1 cause of death for teens.**

Passing a driver's test alone does not make a young driver "experienced." It takes time and practice to gain the experience needed to be a responsible driver. GDL is a learning process that keeps new drivers safe by maximizing experience and minimizing risks. And while it may be more convenient for a teen to drive on his or her own, it's much safer for a parent to drive multiple teens or for teens to drive alone. This will keep your teen as safe as possible.

## Teaching teens about GDL

**GDL reduces teen driver crashes and deaths by up to 40 percent.**

Parents need to make a commitment to work closely with their teens to manage their driving experience and also should set a good example by modeling the behavior they expect. You can implement life-saving GDL practices in your home by following these six tips:

### Extend the learner's permit period.

Prolonging the period in which a novice driver practices with parent supervision increases the teen's driving experience. With a learner's permit stage of at least 6 months – and practice at nighttime and in inclement weather – a teen will better develop his or her skills.

### Set a nighttime driving restriction.

Most nighttime fatal teen crashes happen in the hours before midnight, according to teen driver crash data. NSC recommends no unsupervised driving after 10 p.m., and earlier is even better.

### Set a passenger restriction.

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, one passenger increases a teen's crash risk by 48 percent, and the risk grows exponentially as more passengers are added. NSC recommends zero passengers younger than 218 years of age allowed during a teen's first 12 months of driving.

### Ban cell phone use while driving.

NSC estimates indicate 23 percent of all crashes involve cell phone use each year, and NHTSA found teens are more likely to use cell phones behind the wheel than any other age group. Cell phone use should be banned among all drivers, and parents should lead by setting a good example.

### Make safety belts mandatory.

Safety belts are the most effective safety device in vehicles and everyone should be buckled in at all times. NHTSA data shows wearing a safety belt can reduce the risk of crash injuries by about 50 percent.

### Prohibit alcohol.

According to NHTSA, nearly one-third of drivers ages 15 to 20 who were killed in crashes had been drinking. Every state has a zero tolerance law for underage drivers, meaning teens should not have any measurable alcohol in their system.



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at HOME

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