

No.1/June 2012

Get the 5-Star
Education to become
a 5-Star Driver!Are you an Older
Driver? Get back
to the basics**MEDIA
PLANET**

DRIVER AWARENESS

Personalized
adjustments can
help make your
vehicle safer.

Learn how
physical and
mental exercises
can make you
a more astute
driver.



If you're concerned about a
loved one, there are ways to
monitor his or her driving to
look for warning signs.

TIPS

The National Safety Council recommends

- Set a nighttime driving restriction of 10:00 p.m. earlier is even better.
- No passengers, including siblings, for the first year.
- No cell phone use – hand-held or hands-free. No exceptions.
- Seatbelts are to be worn at all times.

➔ Research shows that regulating these behaviors dramatically improve the odds of keeping teens alive and help them become better and safer drivers.

➔ It's so important for parents to set clear rules and following up with consequences if expectations aren't met. Parents should maintain an open dialogue with teens and discuss the driving rules. Using a Parent-Teen Driving Agreement will help outline expectations and set consequences if they aren't followed.

➔ NCS cautions not to declare victory too early. Data shows the first year after receiving licensure is when crashes are at their highest. Parents should continue to drive with their teens, especially after the teen has received his or her license.

DRIVING THROUGH THE AGES

A comprehensive guide to responsible driving for young adults and older drivers

The National Safety Council **recommends parents spend time with their teens behind the wheel** – start during the daytime, then gradually add in practice at night and in inclement weather.

Protecting your teen driver

Donovan Tessmer was about to start his senior year of high school and had plans to play football in college. Sadly, his dreams never would be fulfilled. Donovan was killed in a car crash just three weeks before he turned 17. On July 8, 2007 he was coming home from a movie with a carload of friends when the driver lost control of the vehicle. While speed was a factor, so was driver inexperience. Donovan and two of his friends were ejected when the car slammed into a tree. Donovan was the only one who lost his life.

Donovan's story is one of thousands that occur each year. Car crashes are the number one cause of death for teens killing as many as suicide and homicide combined. Teens aren't the only ones dying – occupants of other cars, pedestrians and teens' passengers, like Donovan, account for over half of the deaths in teen driver crashes.

Crashes involving teen drivers cost society \$37 billion each year. It's not just those who lose their lives and their survivors who are paying the price. Taxpayers and employers are also paying through higher insurance premiums, Medicaid and health care costs. The National Safety Council estimates that approximately \$13 billion could be saved each year if states enacted stronger teen driving laws that reduce or eliminate the riskiest situations for teens – driving at night, driving with passengers, not wearing seatbelts and using cell phones while driving.

It's startling that the most dangerous year of a person's life is the year after receiving a driver's license – and that is largely due to inexperience. As adults we tend to forget that driving is a difficult skill to learn and the consequences of mistakes can be catastrophic and life changing.

New drivers need to gradually gain experience under supervised and less risky conditions. Crashes



Janet Froetscher
President & CEO
The National Safety Council

involving teens drop dramatically during the first year of driving as they become more experienced drivers. By riding along with their teens before and after they receive a driver's license, parents can help them gain the driving experience they need by reducing or removing risks.

To share the best practices for teen drivers among parents, young drivers and school administrators,

the National Safety Council and The Allstate Foundation have created Teen Safe Driving Coalitions in ten states, including California. Donovan's mother, Martha, is a member of the California Teen Safe Driving Coalition and shares her tragic story to help other California teens and their parents prevent crashes like the one that killed Donovan.

Contact the California Teen Safe Driving Coalition to get involved or share your personal story with the HEARTS Network at hearts@nsc.org – a survivor advocacy group, whose members want to share their stories to help other parents avert these needless deaths. Help us, and parents like Martha, get the word out on how to keep our teens safe on the road.

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INSIGHT



Having the **talk** with your teen — Preparing the next generation for the open road

Question: How can we keep our teen drivers safe?

Answer: Be proactive — arrange for the proper education and training.

Nothing is more terrifying than handing your teen the keys to the car, but there are things parents can do to prepare their children for the dangers of the road.

Summer is a great time of year to commit to helping your child become a safer driver. Not only are parents more likely to find time for the project, but according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, seven of the top ten deadliest driving days

of the year for young drivers occur between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Here are some important things you can do to help protect your teen driver this summer:

Get Specific

Safety begins before you start the car. Reminding a teen to “be careful” is not enough; help plan the route and discuss potential hazards. Have a pre-trip conversation about rules and expectations. Draw up a written agreement for your family, including such things as the number of passengers and the scenarios in which music and food are allowed in the car. Be sure your teen knows and agrees that cell phone use and texting while driving are not only illegal, but deadly.

Teenage passengers should equally understand the importance of driver focus as they play a vital role in helping their driver avoid distraction.

Set Aside Time

Take advantage of summer’s freer schedules and longer days to log some road time with your young driver. Aim for a minimum of 50 hours of accompanied driving between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Time spent driving with you now, will make a big difference in how safe your child will drive when you aren’t there. There’s nothing like hands-on training, but when it comes to driving, technique and approach also make a difference. Driving school is a great way for

your child to get on-the-road training in a controlled environment. Setting aside a schedule for class and practice can create a more structured summer.

Lead by example

When you are behind the wheel, observe the rules of the road and eliminate distractions. Since children learn from their parents, your conduct on the road may be a determining factor in your teen’s approach to driving.

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WE RECOMMEND



Jodi Olshevski
Panel of experts

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NEWS



PHOTO: THE NATIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

5

BEST TIPS

Be a role model

1 Lead by example: Drive safely and stay calm. Don't text. Wear your seatbelt. Be courteous to others. Distractions don't belong in the car.

Go above and beyond your "50"

2 Adhere to (and exceed) the 50 hours supervised driving requirement. Plan and log your sessions. Spend the time to do this right.

Understand and enforce Graduated Driver Licensing

3 GDL works. It's not there to penalize young drivers - it aims to support and protect them. Be sure to adhere to its provisions and discuss the parameters with your teen.

Choose a driving school that's right for you

4 Move away from the "get your license in 5 minutes" philosophy. Education only works if there is time for practice and reflection.

Your teen should know it's okay to say "no"

5 Encourage your teens to speak out if they feel unsafe as a passenger. Have a plan in place for when your teen needs alternate transportation.

SOURCE: COURTESY OF MERCEDES-BENZ DRIVING ACADEMY

Young drivers hold the key to safe driving

Teens help one another to stay safe on the road

Years of lectures, warnings, and cautionary tales from teachers and parents (supplemented by grim films for further impact) do not necessarily turn young drivers into safe drivers. Automobile accidents remain the leading cause of death for U.S. teens. However, peer education adds a new angel to educating young drivers on the importance of caution and awareness on the road. Teens are taking control of the message themselves, working together to spread the word and change their own driving habits.

"Teenagers will not listen to their parents even if they are told forever. Coming from fellow teens

"Coming from fellow teens the message is easier to relate to."

the message is easier to relate to," explains Mallory Keller, a student at Belton High School in Belton Missouri. Keller is involved with Project Ignition, an initiative coordinated by the National Youth Leadership council (NYLC). This past school year, Keller and fellow NYLC members staged a docudrama of a car crash and developed two awareness campaigns: "Belts

on Belton" and "No Phone Zone" to communicate key driving safety messages to Belton High students. They also conducted a survey to see how well Belton was complying with seat belt laws. They found that 90 percent were using seat belts. Good, but not good enough. "We are going to try to improve that this year," says Keller.

Still, young drivers are doing more than simply talking to each other. Through Project Ignition, they are getting involved in advocacy and education for traffic safety legislation and regulations, such as Belton's No Phone Zone.

When a parent hands their child the keys to a car, the teenager becomes responsible for much more than a vehicle. As teenagers

join the world of driving, they are accountable not only for themselves, but for their peers as well. It's reassuring to know that young people are taking the wheel in hand and proving that they are not only willing to talk to one another about important issues, they are getting involved on a much larger level.

Keller and her friends are taking that responsibility seriously and incorporating a forward-thinking approach. "We will be setting concrete goals and developing more programs this year," says Keller.

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Senior drivers fuel the need for safety adjustments

A proper vehicle fit is crucial for aging motorists

The numbers provide a roadmap to the future. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, one in five Americans will be age 65 or over by 2030, resulting in more than 65 million older drivers behind the wheel. Because more traffic, larger vehicles and faster speeds make driving today more challenging than ever, it's vital that aging and elderly motorists make vehicle safety adjustments. An educational program known as CarFit aims to do just that.

Developed by the American Society on Aging in collaboration with AARP, the American Occupational

Therapy Association and AAA, CarFit helps older drivers determine how well they work with their vehicles. As part of the assessment, a trained professional asks questions and a 12-point CarFit checklist is completed.

The process takes approximately 20 minutes, and drivers are given a list of recommendations. Motorists can contact their local AAA club or AARP state office for information about where checks are offered.

Senior drivers often experience changes in vision, flexibility and range of motion. Perception, night vision and the effects of medications also come into play; therefore, its important senior drivers be aware of adaptive devices that can

"A proper vehicle fit for older drivers can mean a safer trip for every motorist traveling our highways."

make their vehicles operate more safely. Some are readily available, such as seat belt and visor extenders and steering wheel covers. Other devices, which may require an expert's advice and training to

use, include larger, panoramic rear-view and side-view mirrors, pedal extenders, hand controls, seat lifts, chair lifts and carrying devices for wheelchairs or scooters, and seat and back support cushions to relieve back pain or improve line of sight.

The bottom line - A proper vehicle fit for older drivers can mean a safer trip for every motorist traveling our highways.

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At the National Youth Leadership Council we value young people and believe they should be called upon to lead.

Project Ignition, funded by State Farm and coordinated by NYLC, is a grant program that is changing teen driver behavior through the power of service-learning.

Visit our website to learn how you can:





Get Informed.
Get Inspired.
Get Involved.




ny.lc/pgrms




PANEL OF EXPERTS

	Jake Nelson AAA Director, Traffic Safety Advocacy and Research		Julie E. Lee Vice President and National Director, AARP Driver Safety		Jodi Olshevski Corporate Gerontologist, The Hartford Financial Services Group Inc	
Question 1: What are three things you can do to assess your driving ability?	Self-screening tools like AAA’s “Drivers 65 Plus” and “Roadwise Review” can provide general information about your driving health and help identify steps to reduce your risk as a driver. For a professional evaluation, contact a local Occupational Therapy-Driver Rehabilitation Specialist to get a formal assessment. Locate an OT and access AAA’s free screening tools online at www.seniordriving.aaa.com .			First, assess your flexibility and fitness: can you turn your neck to check blind spots? Second, assess your knowledge by taking a refresher course, such as the AARP Driver Safety course. Third, assess your stress levels behind the wheel. Are you anxious about driving, or do you get nervous driving in certain conditions, like rush hour? If so, consider curtailing your driving.		
Question 2: What are the most effective ways to boost your “behind the wheel” brain health?	Physical and mental exercises don’t just benefit health—they help your driving, too! The best physical activities are those that challenge your heart and lungs aerobically, stretch and strengthen your muscles, and loosen your joints to make them flexible. For mental fitness, keep three things in mind: variety, challenge and novelty.			For drivers of all ages, good health is critical to safe driving. Keep your mind sharp by learning something new every day, whether it’s a new vocabulary word, current event, or a trivia fact. But it’s not just brain health—physical fitness is also important. Have your hearing and vision checked regularly, and stay active.		
Question 3: What’s the most important thing a family can do to help an older driver in their family?	The best thing you can do for an older driver in your family is to develop an action plan early while the driver can be an active participant in the conversation. Focus on health and fitness for safe driving, rather than a driver’s age. Get involved before driving becomes a worry!			The most important thing a family can do is to simply talk about the issue of hanging up the keys—have conversations as early and often as possible. If you’re concerned about a loved one, there are ways to monitor his or her driving to look for warning signs. Our We Need to Talk seminar has more information (www.aarp.org/weneedtotalk).		
				Smart drivers are always looking for ways to improve. At The Hartford, we recommend: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Checking your driving skills with a self-assessment tool on the internet■ Refreshing your road knowledge by enrolling in a defensive driver course■ For true peace of mind, see an Occupational Therapist for a comprehensive driving evaluation.		
				Maintaining good overall health over a lifetime is critical to being safe on the road. Keeping your brain sharp will also benefit your driving. Several computer-based exercises are available to train the brain, and many resemble video games - making the training fun as well as valuable.		
				As group, older drivers are relatively safe. Families who are concerned about an older relative’s driving skills can: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ observe the driver behind the wheel and look for patterns of unsafe driving.■ plan for and have supportive conversations.■ help find alternative transportation, if needed.		



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