



## 5 ways to make your teen a safer driver

Did you know that motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teens in the United States? In 2015, [1,972 teen drivers](#) were involved in fatal motor vehicle accidents, and an estimated 99,000 teens were injured in crashes. Those are some pretty sad numbers when talking about 15-18-year olds. October 15-18<sup>th</sup> is National Teen Driver Safety Week. Take the time this week to express the importance of following traffic and safety rules to your child(ren). Talk about drinking and driving, using seat belts, distracted and drowsy driving, speeding, and obeying the passenger rules. All very important rules to follow when it comes to operating a motor vehicle safely.

Here are some safety tips and some conversation topics we encourage you to have with your teens:

- **Keep Your Cell Phone Off!** By turning the cell phone off, it reduces the temptation to check texts, emails, or social media notifications. Even using hands free devices such as Bluetooth can be distracting to any driver. Err on the side of caution – when the ignition is on, the cell phone is turned off. Parents – there are also apps available that will disable use of the phone while the car is in motion!
- **Turn on Your Headlights.** There's no rule that says headlights can only be used at night. Keeping headlights on at all time will help increase the driver's visibility as well as other driver's awareness of you. It's especially important to use headlights during dusk and dawn when many people have a hard time adjusting to the change in sunlight. In most states it is the law to have headlights on when it's raining.
- **Practice Defensive Driving.** Always be aware of your surroundings including the traffic ahead, behind, and next to you. Stay at least one car length behind the car in front of you in slower speeds, and maintain a larger buffer zone with faster speeds. If you see a car swerving or driving erratically, give them extra space and try to get out of their path.
- **Avoid Driving at Night and in Bad Weather.** Until your teen becomes a competent driver, avoid letting them drive at night or in bad weather. Visibility is especially poor during these conditions.
- **Driving a Safe Car.** When choosing a car for your teen, and even yourself, look for a vehicle that has anti-lock brakes, electronic stability control, brake assist, lane change monitoring, and extra air bags. You should also look at the crash safety records. It might not be the Mustang Convertible with the V8 that your teen was dreaming about, but when it comes to new drivers, safety is much cooler than looks.

There's no substitute for driving experience and the wisdom that age brings, but by applying the above tips you'll enhance the odds that your teenage driver won't become an accident statistic. Also, when they have a good driving record, free of accidents and speeding tickets, it's easier to find auto insurance that meets their needs in the future.