Teen Driving

OVERVIEW

Teen drivers have a higher rate of crashes than drivers of any other age group as drivers lack the experience and ability to perform many of the complex tasks associated with driving. Teens, particularly males, are more likely succumb to peer pressure, overestimate their abilities, and have emotional mood swings, leading to crashes.

The chance of a teen driver being involved in a car crash is directly proportional to the number of teenage passengers being transported. Alcohol and drug use increases risks. Teenage drivers drive after using drugs and alcohol less often than older drivers, but experience twice as many alcohol and drug-related crashes.

Seatbelt use matters. Teenage drivers wear restraints far less often than other drivers. More than half of the teenagers killed in automobile crashes in 2011 were not wearing seatbelts. Teens are also far more likely to text and drive and to become more easily distracted than other drivers.

AAP POSITION

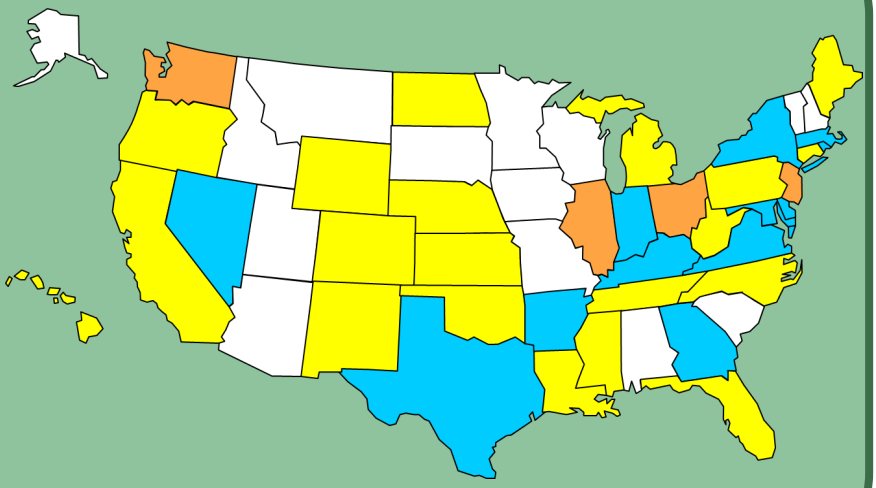
- A learner permit period that starts at age 16 and lasts no less than 6 months.
- 50 hours of adult-supervised, on the road driving during the permit stage with 10 hours at night.
- Nighttime driving restriction that lasts from 12:00 am-5:00 am until age 18.
- Passenger restrictions including no teenage passengers the first 6 months of provisional licensure, and then no more than 1 teenage passenger until age 18.
- Prompt imposition of fines, remedial driver's classes, or license suspension for passenger or curfew restrictions.
- Use of safety belts and appropriate child restraints by all occupants.
- No mobile phone use, including the use of hands-free devices.

FACTS

- If every state had a graduated driver's license program that met AAP recommendations:
  - 175 fewer teens would die in crashes every year
  - 350,000 fewer teens would be injured
  - Over $13 billion in crash-related expenditures would be saved
- No state has more than 5 of the 7 provisions recommended by the AAP.
- Fatal crashes involving 16 year old drivers are reduced by 28% and injury crashes by 40% in states with 5 of the 7 AAP recommended GDL provisions.
- Fatal crashes involving 16 year old drivers are reduced by 21% and injury crashes are reduced by 36% in states with 4 out of the 7 AAP recommended GDL provisions.
- States with fewer than 2-3 provisions in their GDL see much smaller reductions in teen fatal and nonfatal injuries than states with at least 4 provisions.

PROGRESS

- 4 states and DC– laws include 5 of 7 AAP GDL recommendations
- 12 states– laws include 4 of 7 AAP GDL recommendations
- 20 states– laws include 3 of 7 AAP GDL recommendations



For information on current law or pending legislation in your state, please contact the AAP Division of State Government Affairs at stgov@aap.org.

MORE

- AAP Policy–The Teen Driver–http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/118/6/2570.full
- AAP Parent-Teen Driving Agreement–www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/safety/Pages/Teen-Driving-Agreement.aspx
- AAP State Advocacy Infographic–State Roads to Safe Teen Driving–www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/state-advocacy/Documents/State%20Roads%20to%20Safe%20Teen%20Driving%20State%20Advocacy%20Infographic.jpeg
- Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS)–www.iihs.org
- Governor's Highway Safety Association (GHSA)–www.ghsa.org
- National Safety Council–www.nsc.org