



# Teen Driver Safety

## AAA Tips to Help Parents Keep Their Teen Safe From Car Crashes

Many parents of teens and pre-teens realize that car crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers. Few parents know, however, that their child's risk of being killed in a car crash actually begins to increase as young as age 12. AAA has developed simple, concrete tips tailored to help parents keep their teen safe as they navigate the learning-to-drive process.

### Basic tips for all parents of pre-drivers and teen drivers:

- Make a commitment to safety. Teen driver safety requires regular conversations and interaction with your teen.
- Always wear seat belts. Every trip. Every person in the car.
- Be a positive driving role model for your teen. Parents who get tickets and drive dangerously are more likely to have kids who do the same.

### If your child is not yet driving:

- Your child is safest not riding with a teen driver. If your child must do so, it should be only for necessary trips, without other teen passengers, not at night, and with a responsible driver.
- Help your child recognize dangerous driving conditions, such as if the driver has been drinking, is tired, has multiple teen passengers, or is otherwise unsafe.
- Talk about being a safe, responsible passenger. Your child should know to wear a seat belt; refrain from distracting the driver by talking, loud music, or horseplay; and to speak up if the driver is being unsafe.



### If your teen is now or will soon be learning to drive:

- Continue to talk about passenger safety. As your teen's friends and classmates begin to drive, it becomes even more important for your teen to become a smart passenger.
- Learn your state licensing process then compare it to what AAA and other safety groups suggest. Most states fall short of what safety experts recommend.
- Learn about parent-teen driving agreements so that you'll be ready to use one when your teen is ready to drive. Talk with your teen about the agreement so that it is an expected part of the process.
- Select a quality driving school. Professional instructors can provide comprehensive training that addresses the mistakes new drivers are most likely to make.

### If your teen is allowed to drive alone:

- Review your state's graduated driver licensing process and suggestions by safety experts on night driving and teen passenger limits.
- Establish or review your parent-teen driving agreement. Agreements are meant to change with time, rewarding the teen with additional privileges for safe driving.
- Rules about riding with seat belts, impaired drivers, and distracted drivers remain especially important. As teens get older, they become increasingly mobile and their exposure to dangerous conditions increases.

**Find parent-teen driving agreements and other helpful tools for parents of teen drivers online at [www.aaa.com/publicaffairs](http://www.aaa.com/publicaffairs).**