

# **HELPFUL TIPS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

## **1. KNOW EVERYTHING YOU CAN ABOUT DRIVING RISKS FOR TEEN DRIVERS**

- Novice teen drivers crash more than any other age group. Driving is a potentially dangerous endeavor for everyone; however, it is more dangerous for young drivers. In addition, teen drivers are usually at fault. There are many reasons for that.
- With the young age there is a lack of maturity. Teenagers are not known for their great decision-making. They may also have poor judgment skills. They may not "embrace" responsibility the way they should.
- Teenagers commit more risky driving behaviors than any other age group. These include: speeding, running red lights, speeding up at a yellow lights, running stop signs, tailgating, weaving in and out of traffic, not checking left-right-left at intersections, not checking blindspots before changing lanes or merging and not recognizing their traffic control or cross traffic's control at intersections.
- Teenagers lack driving experience. It takes a lot of practice to be able to safely maneuver a car in everyday situations and unexpected circumstances. Teens show the greatest improvement within the first year and 1,000 miles of driving. They continue to improve through the first 5,000 miles of driving.
- For teen drivers, the most severe crashes occur at night and on weekends. Night driving is a challenge for all drivers, but novice teen drivers do not have the experience to anticipate and react to nighttime conditions when visibility is reduced. Be aware your teen may drive differently and take more risks when you are not in the vehicle.

## **2. TOP DRIVING ERRORS OF BEGINNING DRIVERS**

- Not attending to the path of travel.
- Driving too fast for conditions.
- Drives too slow.
- Driving too fast into and in a curve.
- Inadequate search at an intersection and pull in front of cross traffic.
- Improper evasive action.
- Lack of attention at intersections.
- Failure to maintain visual lead at target area.
- Failure to use orderly visual search pattern.

- Following too closely.
- Taking the right-of-way, not yielding the right-of-way.
- Driving distracted.
- Doesn't turn into correct lane
- Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Does not use safety belt.
- Too many passengers. (GDL Laws)

### **3. CHARACTERISTICS OF A BEGINNING DRIVER**

- Nervous
- Straddles lanes.
- Jerky starts and stops.
- Oversteers and understeers.
- Too cautious.
- Neglects to use mirrors.
- Doesn't follow tracking line.
- Hesitates
- Doesn't know left from right.
- Unfamiliar with controls in vehicle. (Turn signals, windshield wipers, etc.)
- Doesn't check blindspot.
- Stares at speedometer.
- Does not know what signs mean.
- Makes unexpected actions.
- Gets gas pedal and brake confused.
- Uses left foot for braking.
- Panic stops.
- Drives off road.
- Does not make correct stop at stop sign or traffic light.
- Does not come to complete stops at stop signs or when turning right on red.
- Poor depth perception.

### **4. SUPERVISE YOUR TEEN'S DRIVING**

- Driver education is the beginning of the process of learning to drive, but teens need **many, many hours** of practice to become low-risk defensive drivers. Illinois GDL laws require parents to provide their teen with a minimum of 50 hours practice driving at home, including 19 hours of night driving. The driver must be supervised by a person at least 21

years old, approved by parent/guardian and has held a valid driver's license for a year.

## 5. HINTS FOR SUPERVISING

**\*Practice, practice, practice and practice some more!!** We recommend at least 1 ½

to 2 hours a week. The next lesson and the lesson that was just taught to your son/daughter in BTW.

**\*Who:** Practice with teen and parent/guardian only in the vehicle. Remember remain calm and focused. They will make mistakes. That is how they will learn what not to do. Practice driving is serious, but should also be interesting and engaging.

**\*What:** Practice the driving skills your teen is learning. BTW Lessons that are in this pamphlet. Begin with the basic skills: left and right turns, backing straight-left-right, covering the grease spot (tracking line), accelerating and braking. We don't go into Peoria until the 10<sup>th</sup> BTW lesson. We gradually introduce more complex traffic situations each week.

**\*When:** In the beginning practice in daylight and good weather. As your teen's skills increase, gradually expose them to different conditions, roads, weather and time of day.

**\*Where:** In the beginning, practice in safe, low-risk driving situations. Start out in empty parking lots or on remote roads. You should drive your teen to and from the safe driving area. As your teen's skills increase, progress to neighborhood streets and later to busier roads and highways.

**\*Why:** Learning to drive is an ongoing process. Build their experience gradually.

## 6. DO THESE EVERY TIME YOU PRACTICE

- Be in the "practicing mood". Practice when you are both ready, are in good moods. And have sufficient time so you don't hurry.
- Adjust mirrors and safety belts before starting the car.
- Use headlights day and night.
- Come to a complete stop when required to do so. Let the car settle.
- Signal 100 FT before turn in business and residential districts and 200FT in rural areas.
- Always practice good visual habits: Look left-right-left at all intersections. Recognize your

traffic control and cross traffic's control. Always check the blindspot in the direction that you are making a lane change or merge.

-Remember "**The Smith System**"

- A. AIM HIGH IN STEERING
- B. GET THE BIG PICTURE
- C. KEEP YOUR EYES MOVING
- D. MAKE SURE OTHERS SEE YOU
- E. LEAVE YOURSELF AN OUT

-Keep at least a 3-4 second following distance.

-Avoid the no-zone of trucks and busses.

-Understand speed increases braking distance. Double the speed - quadruple the braking distance.

-Understand weight increases braking distance. Double your weight - double the braking distance.

-Use the driving log to track your teen's driving and progress.

## 7. SET FAMILY RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR TEEN DRIVERS

-Illinois law sets guidelines for teen driving, but families need to determine other rules and limits for their teen drivers. **Make sure both state and family rules are very clear from**

**the beginning.** Talk to your teenager about driving every chance you get.

\*Require safety belt use. This applies to your teen and all passengers.

\*Prohibit driving after alcohol or drug use , certain prescription medication and certain over-the-counter medication.

\*Prohibit riding with any one who has used any of the above.

\*Require compliance to all speed limits.

\*Prohibit all distractions.

\*Limit teen passengers per GDL laws.

\*Limit unsupervised night driving per GDL laws.

\*Require a full report: information about each trip before leaving; where they are going, with whom they are going and when they will return.

-Just as Illinois law has consequences, so should families. Loss of driving privileges for a set

amount of time to go along with the violation. Make the consequences known so they know what to expect.

-Use a Parent-Teen Driving Agreement to determine appropriate rules and guidelines for your teen driver, and to make sure everyone is clear about them.

## **8. CHOOSING A VEHICLE FOR YOUR TEEN**

-Since army tanks aren't for sale, think about a full or mid-size sedan, station wagon or a full size pick-up. You want as much steel around them as possible. Vehicles with small engines and airbags would be a wise choice.

## **9. KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT TEEN DRIVING**

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens (36%).
- Roughly 35,000 teens have died in car crashes in the past 5 years (18 per day).
- Texting while driving makes you 4 times more likely to crash.
- Almost 65% of all teen passenger deaths occurred when another teen was driving.
- Teens have the lowest seat belt use of all drivers.
- Over 90% of all teens admit to doing multiple tasks while driving.
- An overwhelming 75% of teens admit to text messaging while driving.
- About 54% of teenage motor vehicle crash deaths occur on Friday, Saturday or Sunday – with Saturday being the deadliest day of the week.
- The deadliest months of the year for teen driver fatalities are the summer months July to October.
- On July 4<sup>th</sup>, an average of 28 teenagers die in car crashes every year.
- On January 1<sup>st</sup>, an average of 23 teenagers die in car crashes every year.