

Teen Driving Safety Tips

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It is an unfortunate fact that teens and other new drivers are involved in accidents at a disproportionate rate than seasoned drivers. Not surprising, this is often the result of lack of experience. With driving, there is a lot to know and remember. While there is no substitute for first-hand practice, here are several tips to save lives for novice (and all) drivers to keep in mind, keep safe and, often times, avoid accidents:

- (1) Always wear your seatbelt and make sure that all of your passengers are buckled up too. Don't try to fit more passengers for which the vehicle has seatbelts – it's against the law.
- (2) Avoid the last minute mad dash by arriving to school at least 5-10 minutes early, since many accidents occur when rushing.
- (3) Before and after school, keep alert for school zones where the speed limit drops down to 15 mph, as only some of these zones have flashing lights to warn drivers.
- (4) Stop for buses with flashing lights which are either picking up or dropping off children.
- (5) **If you are the first at any stop light, look both ways to ensure that the intersection is clear before proceeding when the light turns green. This saves lives!**
- (6) **Don't run red lights!!**
- (7) Eliminate distractions such as cell phone conversations and text messages while driving.
- (8) When parking perpendicularly, whenever possible, pull in a spot where you can pull all the way through to the other side, so as to avoid the difficulties of backing out in a crowded lot.
- (9) Avoid busy intersections that don't have turn signals because it takes a while to gage the speed of oncoming traffic. Instead, it's better to drive a block or two extra where there is a signal.
- (10) Watch out for and keep clear of aggressive drivers who cause accidents.
- (11) Abide by the speed limits. Driving fast gives you less time to stop and/or react. One of the main causes of teenage accidents is excessive speed.
- (12) Use turn signals to indicate a turn or lane change. Also, make sure the turn signal stops after your action.
- (13) Exercise extreme caution when changing lanes on busy streets or expressways. Make sure to look not just one but two lanes in the direction you are planning to go, because often times another driver two lanes over is also planning to occupy the lane as you. Also, a glance in your rear view mirror is very helpful to avoid fast drivers from the rear who are appear very quickly.
- (14) Turn on your headlights whenever you need your windshield wipers so that other drivers can see your vehicle better.
- (15) When the roads are wet, allow more space from the vehicle ahead of you to brake.
- (16) Know whether your vehicle has anti-lock brakes or not. If your vehicle has anti-lock brakes, brake smoothly. If your vehicle does not have anti-lock brakes, pump the brakes rather than applying hard constant pressure.
- (17) Test your brakes at the beginning of your drive in bad weather to determine how far stopping will take.
- (18) Tell your parents while they are not driving if you end up in an accident, so as to avoid another accident (which you know has happened).
- (19) Adjust your car's headrest to the height of your head (and not your neck) to avoid whiplash in the event of an accident.
- (20) Take driving seriously! When you see a rude driver, avoid them but don't be one!

This article only scratches the surface. There are many more tips for new drivers and parents of new drivers online. Following are a couple of those links to continue the dialogue:

(A) <http://www.teendriving.com/>

(B) http://parentingteens.suite101.com/article.cfm/10_safe_driving_tips_for_teens