

## TIPS For Parents/Guardians to Effectively Become Involved with their Teen's Behind-The-Wheel Driving Lessons:

Driver Education programs provide only the basics for safe driving. This foundation is not a substitute for experience. The key to successful driver training is for new drivers to receive the proper information and sequencing, and then perform it the same way every time. New drivers must be given many opportunities to practice each new skill. These skills must be repeated many times to become habits. Consistent, supervised practice provides teens the opportunity to develop safe driving habits. Parents or guardians are in the best position to provide this practice. During supervised practice sessions, parents can help new drivers build skills, confidence, and safe driving habits. To make the most of practice sessions, here is a list of helpful hints for the adult coach:

- Use a Student sign and Instructor mirror. (If available)
- Choose appropriate roadways for each lesson.
- Before starting each lesson, make sure the new driver understands the goals of the lesson.
- Be calm, patient and alert.
- Provide directions well in advance (at least 100 feet before the desired location of the maneuver). State clearly where the action will take place, and then describe the action (e.g., At the traffic light, turn right).
- Use the word "right" to mean direction and "correct" when confirming a question or exercise.
- Pull over and park in a safe location when reviewing performance.
- Be able to demonstrate maneuvers. Many times switching sides with you demonstrating the maneuver clarifies the process for the new driver.
- Ask the student questions about what is in view ahead, behind, and the blind spots. This will give you an indication of how effective their vision is.

A parent-teen vehicle-use agreement/contract is an excellent way to be objective and increase the occurrence of safe performance, economical operation, and responsible behavior. Such agreements can reduce the likelihood of crashes. There are many factors to consider when implementing a parent-teen agreement. Guidelines for upholding a parent teen vehicle-use agreement include:

- Limit night driving.
  - Do not use alcohol and other drugs before getting behind the wheel and do not allow use of alcohol and other drugs in the vehicle.
  - Require all vehicle occupants wear safety belts at all times.
  - Restrict the number of teenage passengers.
  - Avoid high-risk driving situations during the first year (e.g., adverse weather, congested traffic, unsupervised long trips).
  - Never drive when excessively fatigued, angry or upset.
  - Be a good role model. Behavior is learned, not innate.
  - Discuss and review the agreement together, emphasizing that driving is a privilege.
  - Be positive. Focus on the teenager's safety and welfare as the main concern, and reward responsible behavior.
  - Act promptly if there is an infraction of the agreement.
  - Be fair. Get all the facts before taking action.
  - Be consistent with punishment for infractions - do not negotiate consequences.
  - Be in control. Don't let teenagers try to change the agreement.
  - Communicate with all your family, friends and associates. Let them know your teen will be driving. Ask them for feedback (positive and negative) should they observe your teen driving.
- Research shows that new drivers need about five years of experience to reach the performance level of the general public. More than 40 percent of new drivers will receive a traffic violation or be involved in collision during their first 12 months of driving. Being a safe driver means not only successfully completing a Driver Education Course, but also undertaking extended, supervised practice during and after the program.