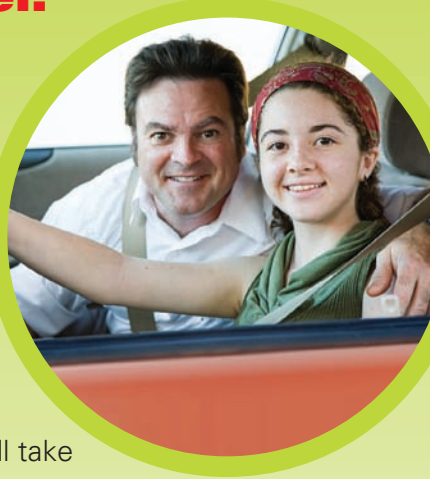


## **YOU** are the #1 Role Model.

Lead by example and teach your teens about courteous, responsible driving early and often, because they will imitate your driving behaviors.

- Always wear your seat belt and insist that others do.
- Never drink and drive.
- Avoid distractions that will take attention from the road.
- Follow the rules of the road and obey posted speed limits.
- Demonstrate courtesy and respect with other drivers.



## **YOU** Hold the Keys!

When you and your teen agree on the driving rules, your teen will become a better driver.

- Teens are less likely to engage in risky driving behaviors when parents set limits on time of day, curfew, distance, passengers, road types and weather, like those listed in the Maryland Parent-Teen Driving Agreement, which can be found at [www.RookieDriver.com](http://www.RookieDriver.com).
- Make sure the rules, expectations and consequences are clear to your teen driver.
- Allow your teen to gradually gain driving privileges as he/she gains experience and demonstrates responsible driving.
- Remember – you have the power to not only take away their keys, but also their license.

## The Hard Truth

- The leading contributing factors cited in police reports in young driver crashes in Maryland include: not paying attention, driving too fast for conditions, failure to yield right of way and following too closely. (SHA, 2008)
- Thirty people are injured everyday in Maryland as a result of a crash involving a young driver. (MAARS, 2008)
- Every three days in Maryland, someone dies as a result of a young driver-involved crash. (MAARS, 2008)
- 16 and 17 year old drivers represent only 1.6 percent of all licensed Maryland drivers, but these drivers represent 11 percent of all driver fatalities. (MVA/NHTSA, 2008)

Source: State Highway Administration (SHA); Maryland Automated Reporting System (MAARS); and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

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RD-018 (6-10)

# YOU

## hold the keys to your teen's driving.

*Get Involved. Stay Involved. Keep Them Safe!*



\* Vehicle crashes kill more teens in Maryland than drugs, guns, or any disease



# Get Involved! STAY INVOLVED!

The more time you invest in your teen's learning-to-drive experience, the better driver he/she will become.

- **Your teen is at the highest risk of being involved in a crash during the first few months of independent driving, which makes your continued involvement key to his/her success.**
- **It's up to YOU to provide your teen with plenty of safe practice driving time and close monitoring, and continuing to do so even after he/she begins driving independently.**
- **Remind your teen that with independent driving also comes individual responsibility.**

## Your Teen Will Take Unnecessary Risks

All teens will most likely engage in dangerous driving behaviors, so it's up to YOU to make sure your teen knows and understands the risks and the irrevocable consequences that can result from just one poor decision.

### Know the Risks

- **Inexperience.** About two-thirds of fatal teen crashes involve driver error caused by mistakes due to inexperience and distraction.
- **Seat belts.** More than 60 percent of teens killed in motor vehicle crashes were not wearing seat belts. Additionally, teens have the lowest seat belt usage rate among all other age groups.
- **Peer passengers.** Driving with just one friend **doubles** the risk a teen driver will be involved in a fatal crash. Driving with an additional friend **quadruples** the risk of a fatal crash.
- **Speeding.** Speeding is a primary cause in all teen crashes and is a major contributing factor in 31 percent of teen crash fatalities.
- **Night driving.** The probability of a fatal crash is twice as high at night.
- **Cell phone/texting.** When teens focus on a cell phone instead of the road, they are four times more likely to be involved in a serious crash. When texting, the risk of a crash becomes 23 times greater.

### Know What You Can Do as a Parent

- **Monitor independent driving.** Help your teen gain experience behind the wheel while also enforcing the rules and restrictions required for driving. Then as your teen begins demonstrating responsible driving, gradually allow additional driving privileges.
- **Require seat belt use.** Insist on seat belts at all times. Remind your teen that regular seat belt use is the single most effective way to protect themselves and their passengers and the best possible defense to reduce motor vehicle crash fatalities. It's also Maryland law.
- **Restrict passengers.** Teen passengers in a vehicle can easily distract a teen driver and/or lead to greater risk taking. The best policy is to restrict teen passengers, especially multiple teens, all the time.
- **Warn against speeding.** Remind your teen that the risk of being involved in a fatal crash increases incrementally with each mile per hour over the speed limit traveled.
- **Limit nighttime driving.** Driving at night is a high-risk activity for teen drivers, with most fatal crashes occurring from 9 p.m. to midnight. If possible, teens should not drive later than 9 p.m.
- **Prohibit cell phone use.** Require your teen to stop at a safe place, preferably a parking lot, to make or receive a call.
- **Prohibit drinking and driving.** Make it clear that it's illegal to drink under the age of 21 and it's extremely dangerous to drive after drinking alcohol or using any other drug.

### Driving Involves Complex Brain Functions

The area of the brain that weighs consequences, suppresses impulses and organizes thoughts, which are required for driving, does not fully mature until the mid-to-late 20's.

- Teens often perceive risks and distractions as less dangerous than reality.
- During the teen years, the brain is still growing and changing in the areas required to handle the complex tasks that driving requires.
- The ability to identify and react to driving situations is much less developed in teen drivers than those of experienced drivers.

